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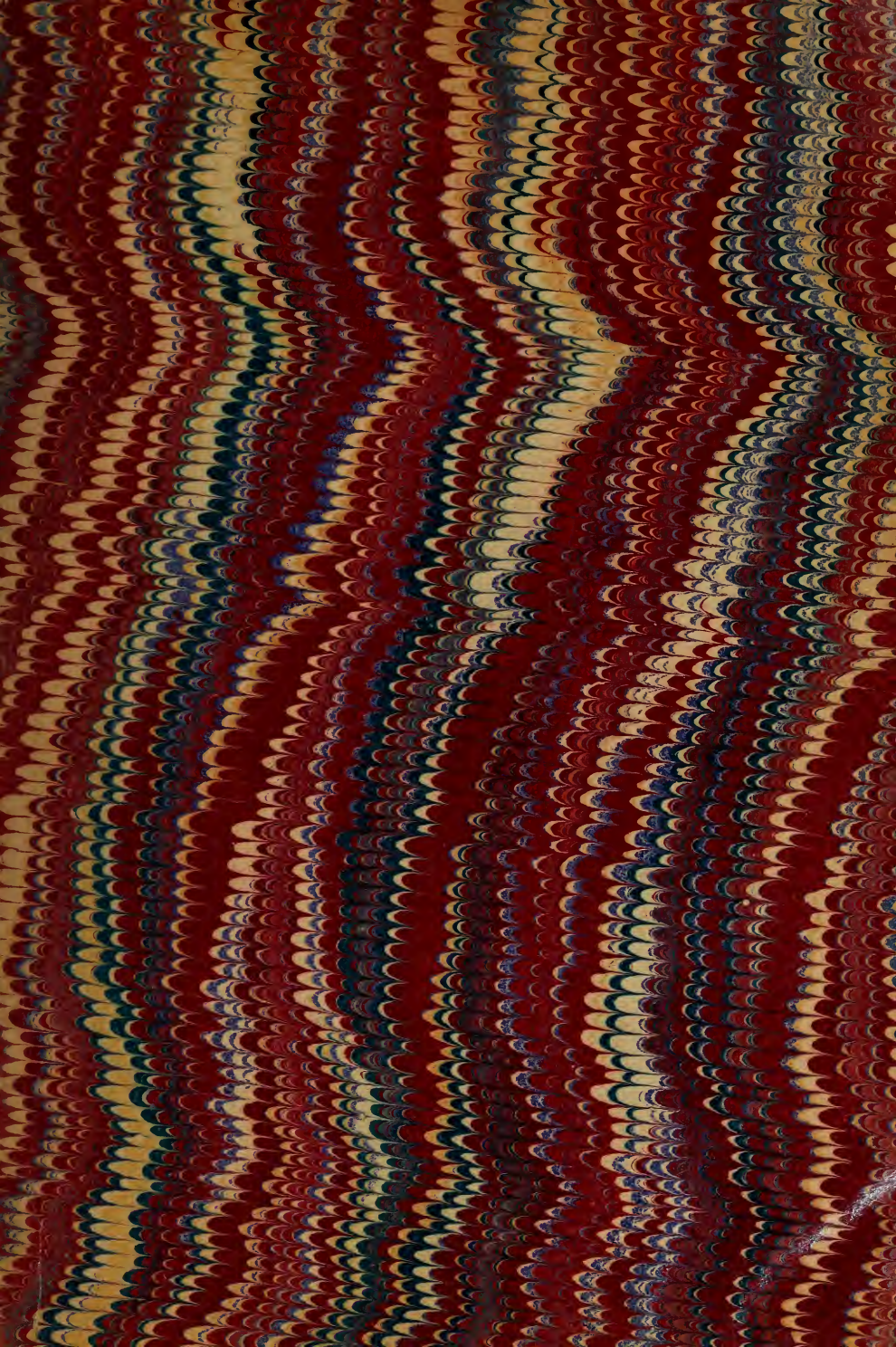
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Caernarvon Castle.

THE  
THRILLING  
EXPERIENCE  
OF  
R. G. WILLIAMS  
REFORMED DRUNKARD AND  
GAMBLER

NOW AN EVANGELIST

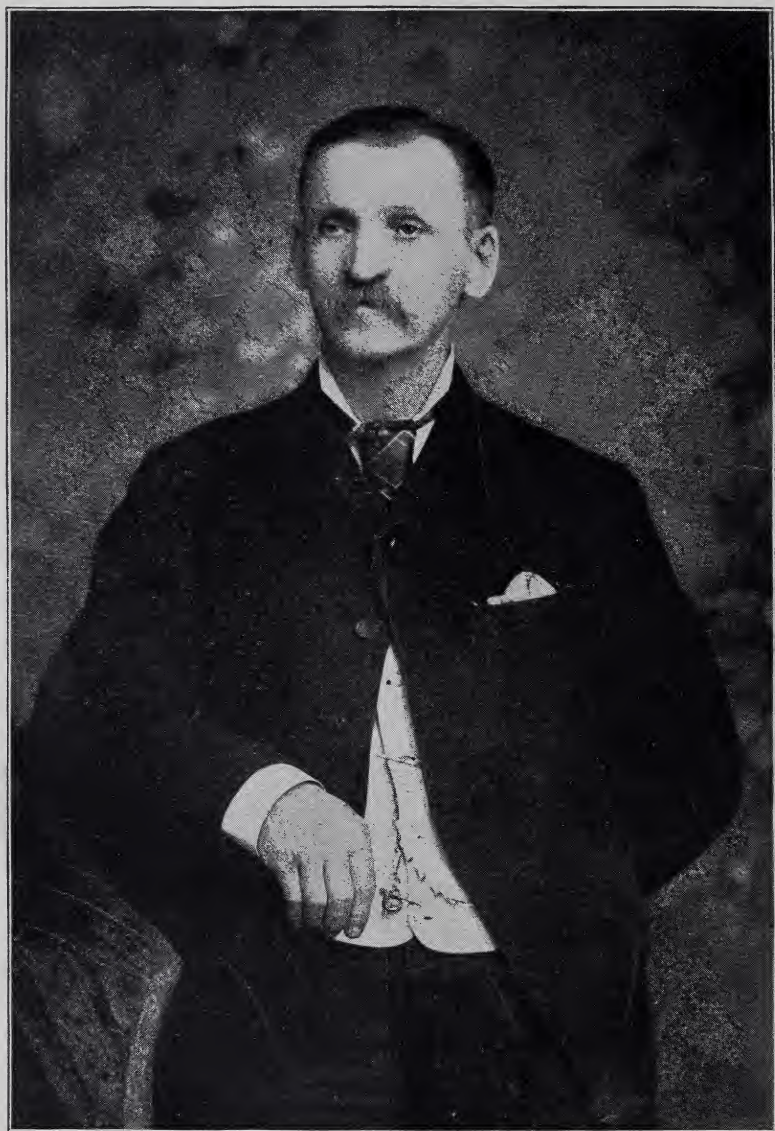
Published by A. J. MARKS, CHICAGO.

APR 23 1890









*J. E. G. Williams*



Thrilling Experience

OF THE

WELSH EVANGELIST

*Robert*  
R. G. WILLIAMS,

REFORMED

*DRUNKARD*

AND

*GAMBLER*

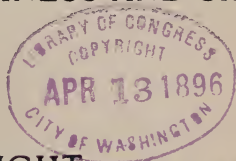
OR

FORTY-EIGHT YEARS IN DARKNESS AND SIN

AND

ELEVEN YEARS IN THE LIGHT

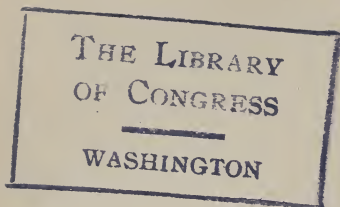
AND LOVE OF CHRIST JESUS.



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## PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

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**A** LIGHTHOUSE is built on the rocks amid the waves where there is danger, to warn the mariner on the sea. It throws its light out into the darkness, that all who see it may turn the helm of their bark, thereby shun the danger and save themselves from death.

A kind word, a friendly shake of the hand, a benevolent act, a sermon, a prayer, a book, the life experience of one who has passed through troubled waters, boisterous seas and dangers of all kinds, are lighthouses by the way, on the path of life, that may be seen by those in danger and the evil shunned.

The object in publishing this book, the sketch of the life of one who has passed through the many experiences given in it, is that it may be a lighthouse truly to all who have tasted of the wine "when it was red" and led a drunkard's life, to all who spend their substance in riotous living in the saloons, at the gaming table, in the theater, or in any of the vices so common and so well known to-day, which tempt young men to drink and lead lives of sin and drag them down to ruin. We have known the Rev. R. G. Williams for many years, and assure the reader that these remarkable experiences of his life are not exaggerated nor overdrawn. He has been faithful to his trust, doing what good he can to "rescue the perishing" and all who have been unfortunate and wish to reform.

He is now working in the missions and churches, holding up the banner of the cross wherever he goes. It is to be hoped that this book may be the means, in the hand of God, of turning the hearts of many toward Him who only can save, and that all who are now chained by the fetters of strong drink may read and be warned before it is too late.

A. J. MARKS,

Rochester Flats, 636 46th Place, near Grand Blvd.

CHICAGO, March 16, 1896.





# PREFACE.



## TO THE PUBLIC.



HIS book of my life's experience is dedicated to a world lost in sin. It comes straight from the earnest heart of one who has known two decided conditions of life, that of a soul **lost** and a soul **saved**. I launch it forth with faith and the prayer that it may carry conviction to the hearts of all who may read it, and bring a sudden right about face from darkness into the marvelous light of God's love. This book has been given for one purpose only, that it may do great good, and be a warning signal to the prodigal in sin. It is the history of a life, honest and truthful, without any exaggeration, paint or varnish.

With love and charity to all, and God's blessing on every one who reads these pages.

From the author,

R. G. WILLIAMS,

The reformed Drunkard and Gambler, now one  
of the Evangelists of Christ Jesus.



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## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTHPLACE.

I was born in the year 1831 in Wales, in the town of Caernarvon (which signifies singing on the river).

Family records show our genealogy to extend back to the Druids and ancient Britons, from Owain Glyndurdu, who was in direct descent from the first king of Wales, the coat of arms still remaining in our family.

My father's family descended from Morris Williams, who lived in the town of Pwllheli, situated twenty-two miles from Caernarvon. They were originally wild and untutored, great trainers of horses and noted for their choice blooded stock of sheep and cattle, of which portions of Wales are still famous. They were very ungodly men, and I inherited the same disposition and a similar nature.

My greatest pleasure when a little boy was to be with horses, and the first event of importance to me occurred when I was eleven years old, for being of the right weight according to the rules, I was selected to ride the fastest running mare for the Queen's Cup, in the town of Barmouth, North Wales, and we were fortunate enough to win. From this dated my fondness for racing.

In the year 1843, a year later, I was importuned to ride in a hurdle race, but my father would not give his consent, so I ran away from home and went to Caernarvon and enlisted on a man-of-war which was soon to sail to

Canada. I then returned home to tell my mother, and asked her not to inform my father until after my departure, for I dare not reveal to him my disobedient intentions for fear of a severe punishment.

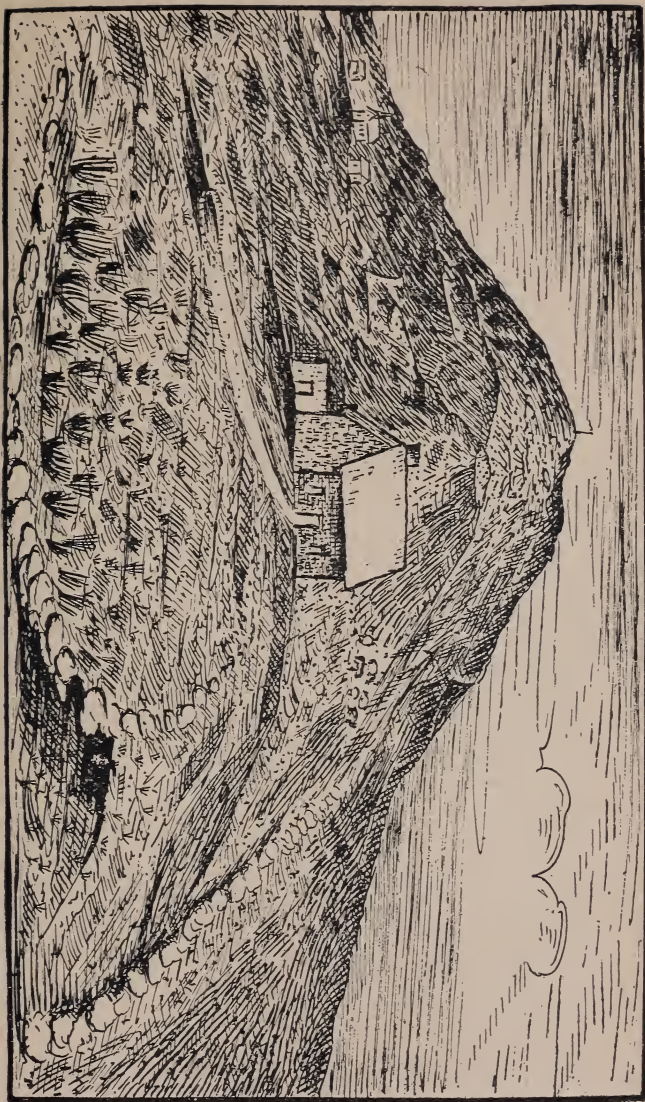
It almost broke the heart of my dear mother, and she promised if I would give up my wild scheme that soon as it were possible they would sell the farm and start for America. This just suited me, so I quickly assented and did not return to the ship again, much to the relief of my mother. My boyish ambition was to see the world, to travel by sea and land.

My mother was a Christian from her girlhood, as were all her ancestors. She was of the ancient family of John Jones, and her birthplace a beautiful homestead farm, called Brigele, which signifies "the light hill." From the porch of her home could be seen in the distance the beautiful blue waters of the Irish channel, while lying between were the lovely meadows, hills and valleys, winding streams, so numerous in Wales, and beyond the channel, like Watt's "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood," could be seen the distant hills of the Emerald Isle.

Many ships, of all sizes, from the monster man-of-war, which fed my boyish patriotism for my own country, to the little sail boat of some lone fisherman, constantly sailed up and down on the bosom of the waters. The distant sails, the multitudinous sea gulls, seemed like fairy nymphs to my youthful imagination. And as the white-winged ships were wafted along by the breezes of heaven, there was fostered within me an appreciation of nature and nature's God which bore fruit in riper years.

Our family consisted of eight children; six boys and two girls. I was the second child, and I think the black sheep of them all.

The cut on opposite page represents the farm and the



THE OLD HOME IN WALES.





little house in which I was born. I will now relate some of my early experiences in the history of my boyhood, and a few of the many peculiarities of my nature at that time. Horace Greeley has said in his statement concerning the Welsh people, that they were all evangelized, but not civilized, and I believe that the spirit of the wild Welshman is still in the children of the ancient Britons and Druids.

The first thing that I recall of my boyish desire for a little fun was about the coronation of Queen Victoria. I helped to carry stones on my back with other boys, one of whom was my bosom companion, whose name was Dick Shomprichard, one of the worst of the neighborhood. We were just suited for each other, full of all kinds of mischief. We all worked hard to build a tower for the flagstaff on the top of the mountain back of our house, to celebrate the coronation of the Queen. Four months afterward we visited the place again, and pulled down the flagstaff and removed the stones to get the money that was placed there by the builders as a memorial, in the foundations of the town. We found the money, and set out immediately for Caernarvon, and had a good time until all of it was gone. Before going to the town, we rolled the two cannon, placed there by the authorities, down the mountain side (in order to have a little fun), and they went with great speed, and were dashed to pieces on the rocks below.

For this destruction of property, and taking of the public money, we were severely punished by our parents. Dick got a good whipping, and I a better one, which I remember to this day. The next one of my boyish pranks, which got me into trouble, was in destroying my mother's china tea set. As my father was a quarryman, and labored in the mines, he always kept horns of blasting powder in the house. One day when my

mother and sisters were away from home, my chum Dick came to visit me.

We thought we would have a little fun, and set about devising a plan by which we could obtain it, and we succeeded as usual. The china set, sugar bowl and cream pitcher were taken from their secret place, and digging two holes in the ground, about eight feet apart, we put the sugar bowl into one and the pitcher into the other. We then dug a trench between the two, and filled the bowl, pitcher, and trench with powder.

We then piled a lot of stones on the whole, and set a slow match to the center of the trench, and awaited the result on the top of a rock to which we ran for safety. There was a great explosion, and the stones flew in all directions, together with pieces of my mother's beautiful china that she valued so highly.

We barely escaped with our lives, and were terribly frightened. We looked around upon the debris and ruin we had made, and enjoyed the explosion, not thinking of the whipping we would be sure to get; but it came, alas! too soon, for that night when we went home each got what he deserved—a sound thrashing. The next day I had to go without eating. I was usually whipped twice a day, and sometimes three times a day, so I became quite accustomed to the rope or lash. The next difficulty I got into was with my father when he wished me to plant some potatoes. He cut and prepared half a bushel of them before going to his work at the quarry, and requested me to plant them in the garden, telling me at the same time (calling me gentleman, as he thought I felt myself above doing any manual labor) that I could go and play after the work was done.

The garden was some distance from the house, on the side of the mountain, and I had to carry the manure and

potatoes on my back. However, my brother William assisted me, and my chum, Dick, who was always on hand, came, and suggested that I should go and hunt rabbits on the other side of the mountain. But how could I go? I had my task to perform—to plant the potatoes. Dick helped me a little. He was stronger and older than myself, and suggested that we should dig a hole and put more than half of the potatoes into it and cover them up. I thought it was a very good idea, and we planted them in that way, as I was in a hurry to get the work done, anticipating great pleasure in hunting rabbits. My father came home that night from his hard day's work in the quarry, and inspected the patch that was planted by his son "Bob," and to his great surprise found that the potatoes had been planted in a wholesale manner, in one hole. The usual whipping came, but Dick and I had our fun hunting rabbits all the same. We had a little dog which used to go with us, but did not know the difference between a rabbit and a skunk, but he was as wise as myself regarding that matter, as the sequel will show. He led us about two miles away from home to the swamp, and began to dig for game in a hole he had found in the bog. I concluded we had the rabbit then sure. He worked faithfully, and we helped him as we could, for we were anxious to catch the game. Dick would dig a little, I would dig a little, and the dog would dig a little. At last we thought we would put our hands into the hole, and, doing so, I felt the soft fur of an animal, and supposed it was that of a beautiful Welsh rabbit. The dog continued barking, and I took hold of the foot of the animal and pulled it out, and Dick quickly threw his coat over it. We tied a string to each foot and took it home, proud of our game, delighted with the rabbit, and never thought of the potatoes, nor of the whipping awaiting us. But

the rabbit turned out to be a skunk, and I leave the rest to your imagination.

I was faint and hungry when I reached home at eight o'clock that night, and I ventured to go to the door and called to my mother to come and see the rabbit.

Father was sitting down to his supper, but jumped up and told me to come in, but the odor was too great for him, and he took me to the hog pen, after kicking me two or three times, making me take off my clothes. He then killed the skunk and buried it, burying my clothes at the same time, to free them from the unpleasant condition they were in. I had to go to bed without my supper and prepare myself for a double punishment in the morning, for planting the potatoes in one hole and digging a skunk out of another. I never forgot that whipping, and laid in bed four days from the effects of it, and had to wait for my clothes to be washed and dried, so I could have them to wear again.

Another of my many pranks will show the peculiar nature of a wild boy determined on having a good time, notwithstanding the restraints of a fond and loving mother. About a month had elapsed since the adventure with the "rabbit" when my dear sister Kate and myself were sent by our parents to the village, six miles distant, to get some groceries for the family. As we had no conveyance of any kind we had to walk. My sister was lame, but she was a good Christian girl and bore her misfortune with meekness.

My mother dressed me in my Sunday suit, and we started together for the village. We had some eggs to exchange for groceries, and I carried the basket. My mother had a nice silk handkerchief, a wedding present from my father, and therefore valued very highly, which she tied around my neck to add to my appearance. After



we had gone about three miles we came to a little railroad that ran from the quarries to Caernarvon.

I jumped on the train as it passed slowly by, and left my poor sister Kate to go the balance of the way alone with the basket of eggs. I did not see her again until I arrived home about nine o'clock in the evening, feeling as guilty as a boy would under the circumstances, for I had traded my mother's beautiful silk handkerchief for a lunch of apples, candy and blood sausages. I saw the light in the window as I approached the house. Father was in bed, but mother, as usual, was anxiously watching, as a loving mother would, for her wayward boy. He quickly jumped out of bed, dressed himself, and got the rope ready to give me a whipping, but mother told him I had lost the handkerchief, for I had lied to her, and she did it to screen me. And now what was to be done? I knew I was to have a severe punishment, for I was guilty. As quick as lightning the thought came to me to run away from my father, for I had a terrible fear of him, and in the darkness of the night I ran away from home to the side of the mountain, and quickly got out of sight.

I came to a pond known as "the pond without a bottom." Here lived a one-legged shoemaker who made our shoes, and was a friend to me. He gave me something to eat. I used to go there often, because he was kind to me, but he drank and so did my father.

When I went into his house he was cobbling shoes, but had his work nearly done, as it was now ten o'clock at night. I had a pair of shoes on my feet which had many large nails in the bottom, as they wore such in the quarries. I did not remain there long, for fear my father would follow and find me, so I started along the edge of the pond toward the sheepfold, a place of shelter made for the sheep. But Satan put it into my mind to

scare my father and make him think I had drowned myself. I took off my shoes and left them at the edge of the pond, put my stockings in another place, my vest by itself and my suspenders by themselves, and made a circuit around by the sheep pen. Then I gathered stones and made a shelter for myself where I thought they could not find me.

I was very tired and soon fell asleep. My father had been hunting for me and had traced my footsteps in the sand, and with several of the neighbors came to the old shoemaker's house, and he told them I had been there a short time before. My father threatened to almost kill me when he found me. The shoemaker volunteered to go with him, and taking a lantern they soon found my shoes on the edge of the pond. They all decided that I had drowned myself, and going a little farther they found my jacket, and still farther they found my vest and suspenders. There were in the party hunting for the lost wild Welsh boy, my father, my sister Kate, the one-legged shoemaker, and our next-door neighbor, Will Needhouse, and the little dog that found the rabbit, expecting to find my body in the bottom of the pond. They continued their search for several hours, with pitchforks and anything they could get to pry into the depths of the dark waters, but all to no avail; they did not find me there.

They marched on a little farther, and saw by the lantern's dim light the impressions of my bare feet in the soft clay, and along the side of the stone wall they followed my trail with the aid of the little dog. As I was well walled in they could not see me. I awoke about this time and heard my father moaning and crying for the first time in my life. I always thought he had no pity in his heart and I trembled all over. I was cold and chilly as it was

long in the night and I had been in that exposed condition several hours. I heard my father say to the shoemaker: "If I can only find my boy I will never punish him again." Many fathers often punish their children in fits of anger, and without discretion or sufficient reason, which alienates their affection for their parents, making them feel rebellious and awakening in their young hearts a spirit of revenge.

The little dog staid by the pile of stones where I was secreted and barked, for he had found his master and would not go away. My father began to pull the stones down from my hiding place, saying: "If I can only find him alive I will never whip him again."

A few moments afterward he found his poor, wayward boy, nearly frozen to death, almost naked, and without shoes, stockings, coat, vest or suspenders, as they had been left at the edge of the pond. My father took hold of me and gave me a great shaking, although he had just been weeping, and said: "When I get you home, gentleman, I will pay you for this." The shoemaker and the other neighbors went home with us, which was nearly a mile away.

It was then about two o'clock in the morning and quite cold. My younger brother, sisters and mother were all crying, but there was joy in her heart when she saw her boy brought back. She put her arms around my neck and kissed me again and again, and said, in her pleading voice to my father: "You must not punish him to-night," and she took me in her arms and said to my father: "William, you can kill me, but you must not punish Robert to-night, for you have hardened him, and have taken all the love from his heart and made him hate you."

She prevailed on him then with a mother's loving

entreaties, and gave me some supper, and plead with me to be a good boy in the future. I made many promises to her that I would obey her, and I would now give the whole world, if I had it, if I had not broken one of them, for she was a good mother to me, my best friend, but I could not appreciate it then, and she is now mouldering in the grave. I love to visit the city of the dead, and to kiss the little daisies, all spangled with the dew-drops of the morning, growing on the little mound where my sainted mother sleeps her long sleep, until the Resurrection morning, when I hope to meet her again.

After all had become quiet again in the household, and things going on as usual, one beautiful morning I took a walk down to see my old chum, Dick, being on my way to see a very wealthy farmer, who was a squire, a justice of the peace who lived in an ancient castle two miles beyond Dick's home. My father had borrowed a little Shetland pony from my uncle, who was superintendent of the estate. I was sent to take the pony home, but remained awhile with my friend Dick, as I found him all alone. In the meantime my sister Kate came to repay some flour that my mother had borrowed some time before, as we received our flour in barrels the first of the month. Kate was my senior by two years and was fourteen years of age at that time.

Dick requested me to bring the pony into the house, which I did. We found a barrel of flour, which had been opened, and Dick proposed that we should play "flour mill." And this was our plan for our morning sport.

We took the old spinning wheel and set it into the middle of the floor, and put the fire tongs through the wheel, then we tied a bed cord to each end of the tongs and put the rope up through the ceiling, suspending the wheel over the flour barrel. We turned the



wheel and the flour flew all over the house, pony, sister Kate and ourselves. The wheel buzzed around and the flour made us all as white as snow. We enjoyed the fun hugely. The closing of this little episode was not so funny, as it nearly resulted in the death of my sister Kate. We took the wheel down and gathered the flour from the floor, putting it into the barrel, but it was only half full, showing that nearly half had been destroyed. Dick proposed another scheme, to add to our enjoyment, and that was to play hangman. As a man had recently been hung in Wales, all of the children in the public schools had been told of it, as a warning to them. We had no Sunday-schools at that time. The same rope that suspended the old wheel in the barrel of flour was used as the hangman's rope, but where to get the criminal we did not know, as there were only three of us besides the pony. But Dick quickly proposed that my sister Kate should act as one, for she was so judged by the court, as Dick acted as judge, while I was the lawyer and the pony looked on as a spectator. Sentence was passed, and she was to be hung by the neck until she was dead.

We persuaded her to stand on the table. We then put a sheet around her, and the loop around her neck. Dick held the rope tightly, pulling her up, while I removed the table, leaving the poor girl suspended between heaven and earth two feet from the floor.

Dick held on to the end of the rope, and she began to cry and scream, her face changing color, but in the providence of God Dick's mother came home at that moment, and rushing in saw the scene. The house was all in confusion, table turned upside down, the pony standing there covered with flour looking like a white polar bear, all but his ears, flour all over the floor and furniture, the wheel broken, and poor Kate hung by the



neck, almost dead, screaming at the top of her voice and crying for help, and her boy Dick and his chum Bob Williams in high glee, having their fun, which they had been prompted to do by his Satanic majesty, for there was no other spirit that would prompt us to do such a dastardly thing. She quickly took Kate in her arms and assisted her down, saving her life, for she was almost dead. With a conscience filled with remorse for the deeds of the past, I draw the curtain for a while over the mistakes of my boyhood, and will now give a description of our family and the scenes connected with our leaving for the New World.



## CHAPTER II.

### LEAVING WALES.

The old farm was sold to a minister of the gospel, living near us. The gold was laid down on our old wooden table, the legal papers were exchanged, and that night was a memorable one to the whole family. A few of our Welsh neighbors were gathered in to witness the sale and transfer of the farm and homestead. My mother was a member of the little church at Caernarvon, the pastor of which had bought our farm. We all loved him dearly, for he was a noble man of God. His name was Rev. John Jones.

I shall never forget the scenes of that night. They had a farewell prayer meeting, shaking of hands, and many tears were shed and the last good-byes said. For the first time in my life the old family Bible made an impression on my young heart. My mother held it in her hand, and the minister, pointing to it, said: "*That* will guide you all the way to America, and through life to that city where we shall meet to part no more." That book was to me from that day something most mysterious, and I loved it as I never had before. The next morning we began getting ready, packing our bedding and other goods for the journey. It did not take long, as we were very poor.

I remember of asking my mother in which box the Bible was placed. She replied: "It is in the bottom of the old wooden chest." I said to her: "How can you leave it there, as you read it so much?" She then took

it out and placed it on the top, where she could find it readily. A strange wish then came into my heart and a strange desire, altogether new to me, which I finally told my mother of, and that was to become a preacher of the gospel. I asked her if she thought God would ever allow me to go back to Wales and preach. She said, "God was very good, and she had no doubt He would permit me to return to my native land and preach Jesus to the people where I first began to sin," and I am now on my way there, God willing.

On the third day all was ready, and we started on our journey. My dear mother, having the youngest child, only four months old, in her arms, looked sorrowfully back upon the old home for the last time, just before the mountain hid it from view.

The scenes of her early youth, and the associations of her past life made her weep, thinking she was never to see them again, and together we breathed a farewell prayer. We arrived in Caernarvon that afternoon in time to take the steamer for Liverpool, the city so noted throughout the world as a great seaport on account of its excellent wharves. Providentially my mother's sister lived there, the wife of William Taylor, an Englishman in good circumstances, and the proprietor of the "Crown Vault," one of the leading hotels in the city, located in Highfield street, near the market. This aunt had two sons and three daughters. One of the sons, Prof. Wm. Taylor, Jr., is professor of mathematics and navigation on H. M. Receiving ship in the port of Liverpool.

We remained here a week, and we children had a good time going around the streets seeing the sights so new to us, while father was busy getting ready to go on board the old sailing ship, "John Bently." After bidding our friends in Liverpool good-bye, we embarked. There

were six hundred passengers besides ourselves. Two hundred of them were Welsh people on their way to the New World seeking homes beyond the sea. This was in the year 1844. The vessel set sail, and taking our last look at the great city and the land of our birth, the ship launched out into the channel which led to the great ocean that was to bear us on its bosom to that land which is so beautifully and truly spoken of by poets and historians as the

“Land of the free and the home of the brave.”



## CHAPTER III.

### A VOYAGE ON THE OCEAN.

We are now out on the sea looking back toward our mountain home, which remained in sight for several days. The Snowdon mountain lighted up by the rays of the glorious orb of day as it sank out of sight in the west. By evening of the third day we were so far out that the clouds and darkness hid forever from our view the land we loved so well. The vessel was now dancing up and down on the waves of the mighty Atlantic, steering its course toward the New World. In the evening the great orb of night seemed to arise up out of the midst of the waters, and, kissed by the spray of the ocean as the great waves dashed high, sparkled like so many diamonds, making a beautiful picture which no artist could paint, for it was God's work, and none can excel the touch of His artistic hand. It made a lasting impression on my mind.

The voyage on the ocean became monotonous, like all sea voyages, until the tenth morning, when we were all summoned upon deck to witness the burial of one of the passengers who had died of smallpox, which had made its appearance in the hold of the vessel. It was a young and beautiful girl of seventeen, the oldest of her family. Only a few days previous she was full of mirth and joy, happy in the thought of soon seeing America and her new home beyond the sea. But God called her to leave her friends, who wept and mourned that one so lovely was



to them no more. A solemn thought entered my young heart when I saw her body, which was brought up on deck after it was prepared for burial. It was weighted and sewed in such a manner as to leave nothing but the face, pale in death, exposed. All who wished were permitted to look upon her for the last time. For a few moments there was a hushed silence among the passengers who were gathered about in groups here and there on the deck. The sea was calm. A little bell was rung by the captain of the vessel, who read the burial service and uttered a prayer, although not plainly heard, because of the moaning and weeping of the father, mother, brothers, sisters and friends of the deceased. The sailors laid the body on a plank and placed it on the bulwark of the ship. Every eye turned toward it, waiting for the signal which was to be given by the captain, who then said, "let go," and the body was instantly buried in the sea. During all of this time the vessel was under sail, but made little progress, as the wind was calm. The sailors called our attention to the number of sharks following the ship, and we could see them distinctly in the wake of the vessel, knowing too well what they were waiting for. It was the first time in my life I had ever seen a shark, those terrible monsters of the deep that often follow vessels on the ocean.

Three other deaths occurred on the ship before we reached the end of our journey, and they were all buried in the depths of the sea. I often think since my change of heart of the wonderful promises of God "That the sea shall give up its dead, and all of its mystery," and that "it shall be no more." After a voyage of fourteen weeks, with much sickness on board of the ship, we arrived at the end of our journey and were quarantined ten days until the vessel was thoroughly inspected and fumigated.

We were then all directed to take the tender or quarantine boat and were landed at Quebec, the noted city of Canada. It was then in the month of August and the hottest season of the year. The Welsh people all joined together and put up quilts to keep the sun from shining on us and we used our trunks for chairs and tables.

Here we received the first fresh meat, fish and bread in our new home and the children enjoyed the milk and butter, and we thought it was Paradise and a land of plenty.

We staid in Quebec three days and then started up the river to Ottawa, but some of our party went in opposite directions; so we were separated, not expecting ever to see each other again. We soon reached a little town called Lower Ottawa on the St. Lawrence river. Here my father began work for the first time this side of the Atlantic. Within two months after our arrival every member of our family was taken sick with ship fever. Our money was all gone, but God in His infinite goodness gave us friends through my dear mother, and we were kindly cared for by Christian people. Some of the children were sick nigh unto death and I among the number. After I recovered I began work by riding the horses on the tow path of the canal. Two Welsh families stayed with us in Ottawa, viz., Wm. Evans, who is still living and is an organ manufacturer at Bridgeport, Ill., a little south of Chicago, whom I met not long since. He is a deacon in the First Congregational church in Lockport, and the other's name was John W. Jones, known by every Welshman in America and in Wales as the distinguished editor and proprietor of the celebrated Welsh paper called *The Drieh*, published in Utica, N. Y. He died two years ago, an atheist, as he had lived in that belief, but his memory will live in the hearts of every Welshman,

for his kind and charitable acts. We three were about the same age and companions on board the ship. They left for the states in a few months, but we remained in Canada and spent the winter in that little town. I am sorry to say my father's bad habits continued the same in the New World though far away from his old associates. His influence was always bad upon me, and from that little village I soon took my departure bidding farewell to my family and home.

My father and I worked for a rich man of the neighborhood digging out stone from his field.

One day when we were working together my father became violently angry and threatened to kill me, and with an oath said he would bury me in one of the holes we had dug, which made an impression on my mind that will never be effaced, for there are wounds made on our hearts which nothing but death can remove.

I told all this to my mother one day when we were in the garden together and that I would not go into the field to work again with my father, and I begged her to allow me to go to Kingston, upper Canada, that I might get work there. I plead with her until she finally consented and said, while still weeping: "My dear boy, I must part with you, though the cord that binds you to my heart be broken in sunder. Go if you must, but your mother's prayers will go with you. God forever bless you, my precious boy."

## CHAPTER IV.

### A WANDERER FROM HOME.

The next morning mother and sister Kate gathered together my few clothes, and bidding all good-bye except my father, for I was afraid to see him again lest he should really kill me, with a sad heart and shedding many tears I started up the canal for Kingston. My mother's tearful face went with me all the way. I can close my eyes now, after so many years have intervened, and immediately see that sad, never-to-be-forgotten scene, arising before me, and it can never be obliterated.

Arriving in Kingston, I soon found a friend in Mr. Joseph Dailey, who was keeping a hotel. He had a good old mother, a Catholic, as were all the members of the family. But they had love in their hearts for the little wandering Welsh boy, now homeless and among strangers. I acted as bell boy in the hotel as well as messenger.

I was now thirteen years of age and could speak but very little English, but soon picked up a little French, and by combining the two languages was fortunate enough to make myself understood.

I had the pleasure of meeting and serving many distinguished men, as the Parliament was held here, and many of the members treated me with kindness and often gave me money. Here I began my forty-eight years of hotel life, and I remained until spring, then went across the river into the United States and went to Utica, N. Y.,

with a colored man named Mink, who owned his stage, on which he gave me a pass. It took us five days to make the journey. I was taken sick with the measles during that time, and when I arrived in Utica I was so weak they had to carry me to the hotel.

For six weeks I was in a critical condition, but, being among my own countrymen, I was well cared for, and after I had fully recovered I started for Albany on the Erie canal, working my passage. Here I found employment at the Thompson House as a bell boy.

The proprietor's name was O. W. Fisk, an uncle of James Fisk, of New York. After remaining here a short time I went to Syracuse and took the same position in the old Globe Hotel, kept by Captain Cody.

Here I had an accident, while wrestling with a young man, and I broke my right leg. The head waiter sent me to his room and took care of me for six weeks, until I partly recovered, but one day, being anxious to get down stairs, I tried going down with the aid of an old broom stick, fell, and broke my leg the second time. I was laid up for another six weeks, and the heartless proprietor, Captain Cody, sent me out of the hotel, and I had to sleep in an old broken carriage in the back yard, where during the night I was almost frozen; but my old friend, the head waiter, gave me something to eat and sent me back to Albany. I was quite lame, but nevertheless went around trying to find work. I wandered into a doctor's office to see if he wanted a boy, and how plainly now I can see God's ruling hand in that occurrence, for the servant girl, after telling the lady of the house a boy was at the door asking for work, invited me to come into the parlor to see her mistress.

The lady had a beautiful face, full of the radiance of God's love, and, although my clothes were not very clean,



she told me to sit beside her. She then asked me many questions about my mother and where I came from. She then asked me if I was hungry, and as I was I told her so. Then she sent me down to the kitchen and the cook gave me a good meal. This was the first Christian kindness I had met with since I left my friend, Moses Yacht, in Syracuse, and it warmed my heart. Returning to the parlor, this good lady asked me if I could read and write. I told her I was sorry to say I could not. I must have been very backward, for I was then nearly fifteen years of age. She then asked me if I would kneel with her in prayer, and as she prayed I saw her weeping, which made a strong impression on my heart, and I loved her for her kindness to a lonely boy. I was employed from that time in the office of her husband, whose name was Dr. Hunn, one of the wealthiest and most distinguished physicians in Albany. Through the Christ-like love that dwelt in the heart of this Christian lady I was taught to read, write, and to send the first letter I ever wrote to my dear mother in Canada. She taught me to read the Bible and pray in English, and took me with her in her carriage to Bishop Potter's church, of which she was a member. She always sympathized with the poor, and aided them in many ways, like Dorcas of old. After two years I left that lovely Christian home and school, and that was the only time in my life that I had any opportunity to learn. Soon after I left Albany the doctor and his most estimable wife both passed away, dying in the faith, having completed the work the Master gave them to do, and the gratitude of the wandering Welsh boy will ever be increased by even thinking of the burial place of those dear friends, Dr. and Mrs. Hunn, away off there in the city of the dead, on the banks of the beautiful Hudson.

## CHAPTER V.

### LEAVING FOR CHICAGO.

I went to Buffalo from Albany in the year 1847, and took the position as cabin boy on a schooner bound for Chicago, which was named after the captain's daughter, Mariah Hilliard, who is still living in the great metropolis of the west.

After a passage of four weeks we reached our destination and cast anchor in the harbor. At that time Chicago was only a small city, having no railroads and few hotels. It was my first visit to the west. There have been many changes since that time. There were no street cars then, and my first impressions of Chicago are indelibly stamped upon my mind. The streets were very muddy, only a few were paved, and in some places there was doubt of finding the bottom. For instance, on Lake street I saw this sign placed where every passer by could behold it: "NO BOTTOM HERE." It was with great difficulty that teams got about.

But a few years have brought great changes in the city. Now there are many broad boulevards and parks, delightful avenues, palatial residences, great hotels, magnificent business blocks, some of them twenty stories in height, railroads almost without number entering the city, and from a population of a few thousand at that time the city now numbers over a million and a half of people.

I obtained a position in the old American Hotel, on

Clark street, as a knife cleaner, at nine dollars per month. I visited the theaters and places of amusement and never thought of saving my money, for which I had worked so hard.

The Mexican war broke out at this time and I often listened to the inspiring strains of martial music, the fife and drum and bugle, as the soldiers marched through the streets, which always awakened in me a desire to be a soldier and go to the field of battle. I soon found my way to the headquarters and asked to be allowed to enlist. They said I "might do for a powder monkey," but after measuring me I was found to be half an inch too short and but for that circumstance my life would have been entirely different. One ought to be thankful for the small things of life, for in this case only half an inch in stature changed the whole course of my life, which makes me think of the lines of the poet:

"A pebble on the streamlet scant  
Has changed the course of many a river,  
A dew drop on the baby plant  
Has marked the giant oak forever."

Even a sparrow doth not fall to the ground without God's notice.

It was a great disappointment to me that I was not accepted and could not become a soldier. I had become so enthused with the military spirit that I purchased an old second-hand carbine, and used to practice shooting at the trees across the river, and at any game that I could see, and there were ducks in *those* days on the Chicago river, as well as Indians, not far away, as we could see them often, paddling in their canoes on the water, hunting for game. I soon spent all of my money sporting, and was penniless, and out of a situation again, without a place to sleep or anything to eat. For "the

fool and his money had parted," alas, how soon! and were friends no more. But I found a friend in a Mrs. Williams, the head cook in the old Lake House.

She gave me money often, and something to eat. While attending the meetings at the First M. E. Church, on the corner of Clark and Washington streets, she became converted. Here she met the Hon. Judge Goodrich, then a prominent member of the church, and a distinguished member of the bar in the city. She made him her agent, and gave him her money to invest for her. He did so, and being very successful, she became quite wealthy. But meeting her again, after forty-seven years had passed, I learned that she had been married, and very unfortunate in the later years of her domestic life. Becoming a little tired of Chicago, and not having been successful while there in business, I thought I would return to Boston, and try my fortunes again there. I did so, and made an engagement with Messrs. Holeman and Clark, managers of the United States Hotel, as a bell boy.

Here I became acquainted with a young man some older than myself, by the name of Bidwell. He was an American, but claimed to be an atheist. He was certainly an unbeliever and a thoroughly bad man. With him I went into avenues of sin which before this I had not known were in existence, into the very jaws of death, even to the mouth of hell, and the echoes of the damned are still ringing in my ears as the procession of sad memories of my misspent life rise up before me. Why did not God annihilate me ere I so desecrated the temple which He had made for His indwelling.

But alas! the little seed of good thoughts and aspirations sown in my heart by those Christian friends, Dr. and Mrs. Hunn, was being choked by contaminating association, if not entirely uprooted.



First he led me into all manner of drinking houses and saloons which were so numerous in the city of Boston. Much to my shame and sorrow at being so easily led he succeeded in making me a drunkard.

He also took me into many of the gambling houses and other places of wickedness which I shudder to mention. He persuaded me to go to theaters and opera houses to see the plays, and I think there was no place of iniquity in the city that we did not visit, which as bell boys we had access to, for he acted as agent and guide for the devil, his master, to take us, and step by step I became a slave to the wiles of him whom I was serving. I became accustomed at that early age to and delighted in all kinds and manner of drinks.

In 1848 I changed my position, and became night clerk at the Revere House, which position I held for a year or so. At this hotel I became acquainted with many distinguished and noted persons, who have since passed away. Among them were Daniel Webster, N. P. Banks, Rufus Choate, James Fisk, Jenny Lind, Madam Anna Fillion, and many other operatic and theatrical people and actors in all the various phases of stage life, as well as many renowned politicians.

After this engagement I took a position as clerk in the large European hotel on the corner of Bacon and Tremont streets, under the management of Major Barton, where I became acquainted with George Vanderhoff and George W. Warren, and other distinguished persons who used to stop there.

I left this hotel to become, by the influence of Robert G. Cotman, assistant manager of the wealthiest club in Boston. Here my services brought me in contact with the wealthy and most celebrated people in the city—the Hancocks, Dr. Beethoven, the Lawrences, and other members of the club whose names I have now forgotten.



## CHAPTER VI.

### LIFE ON THE STAGE.

At this time the needle of my life's compass pointed in another direction, and I crave the indulgence of my reader while I give a short description of my four years' life and experiences on the stage and in the green room. I was charmed and my senses bewildered by the glittering scenes and associations of the actors and actresses with whom I had become acquainted during my hotel life. The names of a few I will mention. First, Wm. Goodall, of whom Edwin Forrest said if he lived he would be the greatest actor in the world. He took a great fancy to me, and by his winning entreaties and through our drinking associations that bound us together, I left the service of the club house and became a member of the Howard Athenæum, under the management of Charles Thorn, the veteran actor, one of the Thorns where both male and female became so distinguished, viz.: Emily Thorn, Edward Thorn, and Charles Thorn, Jr., who died in the prime of life, the cause of his death being strong drink.

Some of my associates at the time of my life which was spent on the stage were John R. Scott, J. R. McVicker (owner of McVicker's theater, Chicago), Julia Daily, Redmond Ryan, Mrs. Melinda Jones and daughter, the beautiful actress who was burned at New Orleans. My first engagement brought me in contact with some of

the most distinguished actors and actresses that have been known from that time until the present. The last engagement I had at the Howard was to play an important part, with Lola Montez as the Countess of Bavaria. I also had the pleasure to act as her lover in another play entitled "Charlotte Corday," or "The Maid of Saragosa," also in her own play of "Lola Montez in Bavaria," and finally in her most beautiful of all plays, the "Cabin Boy," or the "Wept of Wish-ton-Wish." But she, too, has passed away, and her name is seldom spoken, lingering only in the memory of some of her early admirers.

Leaving Boston and going back to New York, after an absence of nine years I made an engagement with Charles Parslow to go to Charleston, S. C., to play through the winter as a heavy man in the Charleston theater, then under the management of Charles Sloan and Stage Manager Barrett. I played there with many distinguished actors—Forrest, Booth, Barrett and others.

Here I became perfectly inebriated with drink, seldom seeing a sober day or night during the entire engagement in Charleston. Hardly a night did I go to bed without having a bottle of cherry brandy in order to help me study my part. I seemed to become perfectly infatuated with fancy drinks, such as cordials and wines of all ages and different ingredients. Now they look to me like so many fiery fiends, hissing at the poor drunkard as he passes by them. Then they were my bosom companions, and we nestled lovingly in one another's arms. I can now realize the meaning of the words of that poor maniac drunkard, when he said: "I have seen the fiends of hell in phantoms that no pen, not Shakespeare, not Byron, nor Fitz Green Halleck, nor Longfellow, nor any poet or artist, not even Dante's Inferno, can portray or describe the horrors that come to me, a drunkard, when in the

delirium caused by the cursed drink." He is like Dives, when he cried to Lazarus to bring him a drop of cold water to cool his parched tongue while in the torment of the flames. There is this difference, the drunkard cries for whisky: "Oh! give me whisky to cool my parched tongue; give me something that will drown the voice of my sin-stained conscience. Is there no escape?" "No," says the drunkard, "it's too late! too late! I am doomed. There was a time when I might have escaped all this, but it is now too late. *Give me rum; I will have rum!* I have sown the wind, I must reap the whirlwind, even if it is in hell!"

Dear reader, I have experienced all this, and more, if possible. I fancied at one time I was in a dark and hideous cellar or gulf, alone in a great abyss, surrounded by serpents of all sizes, boa constrictors, rattlesnakes, huge alligators with mouths wide open, fierce demons with eyes glaring at me, with their forked tongues spitting forth venom, the poison of hell, and chattering at me with their teeth. I saw an innumerable number of bodies of the dead and dying; also many beasts groaning with pain and anguish, seemingly dying and yet not dead. I looked a little farther and saw skeletons scattered here and there, being burned in liquid fire, red and glaring, and yet not consumed. I wanted to get away, but was kept there, until at last I saw a light, which broke into the gloom around me like a ray of hope coming into the heart filled with despair. I started toward the light and saw an angel clothed in white extending her hand toward me, beckoning me to come.

Summoning all the courage and effort of will I could master, I started, stumbling over the carcasses of the dead and slimy creatures. Following the light as best I could, and my angel guide, at last I reached the open day, and

awakening from this terrible trance, which was more of a reality, I found myself alone. The angel had gone, and I resolved then and there never to touch the unclean thing again and prayed to be delivered from such a curse.

I found that the way of the transgressor is hard, that there is no peace for the wicked, that "the wages of sin is death," but, also, that the "gift of God is eternal life."



## CHAPTER VII.

### BACK TO HOTEL LIFE.

After my engagement in the Charleston theater was ended, for a few months I filled a vacancy in the old La Fayette House, in Wilmington, N. C., as general clerk. I there became acquainted with a number of prominent southern politicians and statesmen, and Jo Davis, the noted slave dealer of Richmond, who afterward became the proprietor of the Purcell House. I staid there five months and returned to Charleston in the fall of 1853, and acted as night clerk in the Mills House in that city, then under the management of the Nickerson Brothers, Jo Purcell, of New York, being the principal clerk.

Among the many patrons and guests at this hotel with whom I became acquainted were Jefferson Davis, Jo Davis, Alex Stevens, Jas. H. Treadwell of Columbia, S. C., and Wm. B. Yancy of Montgomery, Ala., one of the greatest orators of the South. During my stay there I became socially and politically a democrat, bitter to the extreme, uniting with the above gentlemen in many social toasts and drinks, and partaking with them in their many social enjoyments. They were the magnets and great lights of the South. I was always delighted from my boyhood with fiery oratorical speeches, and had a great love for great men, whether in character they could be called good, bad or indifferent.

I will mention a circumstance that took place concerning the Hon. Jas. H. Treadwell, who was fond of the



various cups, champagne, maschino, curiso and absinthe, and all of the cordials of the time. He became very much intoxicated and lost his beautiful silk hat somewhere in the streets of Charleston during the night, and went home in the morning without it. As he was about to leave I had the pleasure of lending him my own hat, a new shirt and collar, so he could return to his family in Columbia as a gentleman, which he was, unmistakably, when sober. A month later I visited Columbia and was the guest of this distinguished lawyer, who more than repaid me for my little kindness of being to him, as he said, a friend indeed in a time of need.

I returned again to Charleston, and while waiting at the depot I chanced to find a large pocketbook lying on the floor near the ticket window, containing \$2,800 in bank checks and \$800 in bills of large denominations on the Cape Fear Bank of Wilmington, N. C. Wondering what to do with the pocketbook, not knowing fully its contents, and almost trembling with fear I ventured to ask the ticket clerk if any one had inquired for a lost pocketbook. He said "No." I partly opened it and saw bills of the denomination of 20's but did not have time to count the money, as the train was then about ready to start for Charleston; but as I started for the train I saw a large, fine appearing man coming out of one of the cars, looking down on the platform, feeling in his pockets, and evidently very much excited.

Thinking by his manner he had lost something, I walked up to him and said: "Have you lost anything?" He looked at me very suspiciously (which I now can remember very vividly). He said, quickly, "Yes, Sir. I have lost my pocketbook." I then said to him: "I have found one, but I do not know its contents. If you can describe it correctly it shall be yours, and not otherwise."

He gave me his name as Robinson, of the firm of Whitman & Robinson, a large agricultural firm of Baltimore, Md., which is still in existence. He described perfectly the checks and names of the bills. I opened the wallet and found them as he had described, and gave it to him at once. Although the money might have been mine, and I had a great desire to keep it, yet a still small voice, the meaning of which was taught me by my sainted mother when a little boy in our mountain home in Wales, said that "honesty is the best policy" with men and God. Conscious of this great fact my heart became at ease after I handed him the money, although he did not give me a dollar at that time. He said to my employers, however, at the Mills House, that I was an honest man, and handing me his card as he was about leaving for his home in Baltimore, invited me kindly to call on him if I ever came to the city, and make his house my home as long as I remained.

Ten years after this occurrence I visited Baltimore, and at that time I had left my hotel life and was following my old vocation of gambling. I had lost all my money in a faro bank at Joe Hall's gambling hell in Philadelphia, but had enough, however, to take me to Baltimore. Remembering the name of the firm Whitman & Robinson, I made inquiry and found them, making myself known to Mr. Robinson. He at once invited me to his elegant home on Broad street, and I remained there during my stay in that city. I met with a warm southern welcome, not only as far as food was concerned, but he inquired how I was financially situated, and tendered me what money I needed at that time with many expressions of gratitude and kindness. He introduced me to his partner, and also to many of his best friends in Baltimore, always speaking of the finding of the pocketbook with

great pleasure as he introduced me. This proves the truth for righteousness, that true "honesty is the best policy." So I was rewarded for the kindness I did him many years previous. If I had kept the money I found I would, in all probability, have spent it in gambling, and would have had a remorse of conscience for not giving it to the rightful owner. "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" by being dishonest to his fellow man, and especially to God, who created him.

As I look back on the pages of my memory, I will describe one of the pictures I see there, viz.: my first visit to the city of Baltimore (some years previous to my last visit there). When I was a bell boy in the Astor House in New York, at the time Messrs. Coleman and Stetson were proprietors, an inquiry was made by a distinguished lawyer of Baltimore, Reverdy Johnson, for a boy to work in his office. I was recommended by the head waiter at the hotel as an honest Welsh boy, and Mr. Johnson being pleased with me, decided to take me back with him. That night before leaving he gave me a ticket to a Jenny Lind concert which he had purchased at the renowned auction sale of Jenny Lind's first appearance, tickets spoken of in P. T. Barnum's early reminiscences in New York, when the bids ran so high, and "Knox, the hatter," outbidding all others, received the first choice. It was Jenny Lind's first appearance in America, at Castle Garden Theater. I heard her sing. I was *more* than charmed. I was enraptured. Has the world ever produced a greater singer? Certainly not in the estimation of those enthusiasts who heard her at that first concert. Will I ever forget her rendering of the Mocking Bird? Never! to the longest day of my life.

I shall always remember Jenny Lind as a star of the

first magnitude, whom to see and hear was one of the great events of my life, and Mr. Johnson will always be remembered for giving me such a feast of song.

The next morning, at ten o'clock, we started for Baltimore, where I entered my new occupation. I remained with Mr. Johnson six months, but left with a good recommendation from him. I never liked his wife, she was so strict with me, although I now see it was for my good. I returned to the flesh pots of Egypt, New York, and found employment in the noted Washington House, No. 1 Broadway, near Bowling Green, once the headquarters of Gen. George Washington, where General La Fayette and all of the generals of the Revolution had frequently met. The house was now managed by Mapes & Bartlett. I was soon installed as steward and waiter.

I remained here a year, and then went to the Everett House on the corner of Seventeenth street and Fourth avenue, near Union Square, where I was made steward. This hotel is still in existence, and is kept by Halliday Clapp, Esq.

After a year's service here, I went to the St. Dennis, on the corner of Eleventh street and Broadway. It was at that time the leading European hotel of the city, and stood opposite to Grace Episcopal Church. The proprietor was a Frenchman by the name of Monsieur Julien. This was in the year 1859, and I was 28 years of age. Many noted persons from different parts of the world made this hotel their headquarters—English, Spanish, French. Among them were Jacob Leroy, who, with his family, was considered to be the richest man in New York. The Hon. Daniel Webster and wife were also occasional guests at this house. D. K. Collins, the great steamboat man, and his family; Mr. Gaylord, of California, and others from New Orleans; Ex-Mayor Robert



Watterman; and Mrs. Dr. Graham, whose husband was then on trial for the murder of Colonel Loring at the St. Nicholas Hotel. Fisk and Erkwood, of New Orleans, wealthy planters, Knowlton and Tilton, were all witnesses in that notable trial. Major-General Almonte, who was on the staff of General Santa Anna, and minister to the United States to settle the debt that was pending between Spain and this country, was also a guest at the St. Dennis, all of whom I personally knew in my capacity and took pleasure in serving.

About this time General Santa Anna's private secretary died at the hotel, and I sent a telegram to the General, who was then at Washington, D. C., telling him of the sad event. Later on I had the honor and pleasure of visiting him at his private residence on F street in Washington. Count Sartise, minister of the French legation, and family, were stopping at the St. Dennis at this time, and those two families were among the most noted in New York, and were rivals in many respects.

General Almonte drove six red and black Spanish horses, having on them the full coat-of-arms of his nation. Count Sartise owned six beautiful gray Arabian horses, and took great pleasure in driving them through Central park and Broadway. The afternoon scenes at the hotel were very animating and interesting when these gay equipages were about to start. Being accustomed to such scenes and such society, I became very proud in heart, and thought a hotel manager, though poor, might partake of some fashionable pleasures. I therefore obtained a bob-tail, short-mane, English-style of a horse for my afternoon rides, and was vain enough to imagine myself as good as the prince of Wales, and thus my pride and vanity were gratified to a great extent, and I thought I was of some consequence in the world. At this time I



had not learned that all this was vanity and vexation of spirit, and that I would have to stand alone in the day of judgment to answer for the sins done in the body, for I was a sinner *in* the world and *of* the world.

At this hotel I became exceedingly fond of drink, and at times drank to excess, and often like many other drinking men, plead indisposition for my drunkenness. The operas and theaters were to me so fascinating that they became my ruin. My wicked heart made sinful pleasures a joy and delight.

Charmed with the fashions of this world and its pleasures, I became a willing victim to the wiles of Satan, that prince of darkness, and step by step was dragged down toward the drunkard's hell.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A VISIT HOME.

Soon after this I left the St. Dennis Hotel, for the purpose of visiting my mother and the family, who were now living near Utica, N. Y. They had moved from Canada, coming by the way of Queenstown and Buffalo, and while there that greatest treasure God has given to man was stolen from the old wooden chest. It was our old family Bible, in which were the family records—the marriages, the births and the christenings of the children which had been solemnized in the little English Episcopal church located by the seaside, near our home in Wales. It was nine years since the time I had written my mother from Albany, and this visit would be the first meeting with the family since leaving our former home in Canada when I was a mere boy. Arriving in Utica, I immediately sought for employment, my previous experience influencing me to apply at some large hotel. I found the position of clerk and barkeeper vacant in the Baggs Hotel. The proprietor, Wm. Churchill, persuaded me to accept it, which I did. Upon inquiry I learned that my parents had moved to the little town of York Mills, near Utica. This town had large cotton interests. The principal manufacturing establishment was owned by the firm of Campbell & Walker, whose goods found a ready market all over the world.

The next day after I arrived I called upon the Rev.

Treedor Jones, a Welshman, who is at the present time living in Keokuk, Ia. He has grown old and gray in the service of his Lord and Master, and is now about ninety years of age.

He accompanied me to my mother's house, and on the way there I requested him not to tell the family who I was, but introduce me by another name. No one who reads this short sketch of my life can imagine for a moment how my heart beat all the way from the minister's house to that place where I knew in a few moments I was to see my beloved mother and clasp her in my arms. I was like the prodigal son returning home after many years, having wasted all my substance in riotous living with boon companions I had found in the various cities where I had sojourned. I had disregarded my poor mother's tears and prayers, and was like many another wayward boy to-day who causes his mother unending anxiety and sorrow. Many there are, while I pen these lines, away from home and its sacred influences, reveling in sin, wasting the best years of their lives in theaters and many worse places in our great cities.

But rest assured, young man, your mother's prayers will follow you, and some time you will see the error of your ways and weep tears of anguish that you were so hardened in sin as to disregard a loving mother's prayers and tears. The wandering boy will be brought back to his right mind, and to his father's house where there is "bread enough and to spare." I thought of my mother's acts of love, shielding me from my father's anger and of the last time I saw her, so many years ago, standing at the gate with her arms around my neck while the tears ran down her cheeks.

How she had there placed her hands upon my head and offered a fervent prayer for her boy who was going

away from home and her influence, and perhaps she would never see him again.

How well I remembered that sight, the last wave of her hand before I disappeared in the distance.

“Oh, those beautiful, beautiful hands!  
As they pressed my aching brow,  
They cooled the fever and eased the pain;  
Methinks I can feel them now.

My mother's dear hands, her beautiful hands,  
Which guided me safe o'er life's sands,  
I bless God's name for the memory  
Of mother's own beautiful hands.

Oh, those beautiful, beautiful hands,  
I shall clasp them again once more,  
As my feet touch the bank of the heavenly land  
We shall meet on that shining shore.”

That was indeed a sad day to me. I did not know that I should ever see her again. For I was going I knew not whither. Among strangers who perhaps would be unkind to me, a poor wandering boy, and my heart almost failed me. But I thought of my father's threats and the many times he had brutally flogged me, and that nerved me to proceed on my lonely journey.

It was now the month of October and many leaves of the trees were falling, most of them changed to the glowing tints of autumn impressing one's soul with pure and lofty thoughts of that great Artist of the universe. The grass was very dry in the meadows, the rose had long since faded and withered away. The shadows of the night spread over the valleys in which was situated the little village of York Mills, the harvester was wending his way home and the lights were shining from the windows of the humble cottages. We had to go but a little distance.

There was no bell to ring, no knocker upon the door of the humble little dwelling we were approaching, but inside there were rich treasures for me. After the door was opened we were invited to walk in. The first figure and face my eyes beheld (and I can see the picture now) was one that no artist can paint. It was the pale and care-worn face of my beloved mother. I trembled all over and had an almost uncontrollable desire to rush in and put my arms around her neck and kiss those dear lips I had hungered to see.

I could not recognize any other face but that of my mother, as years had made great changes in my brothers and sisters. All were there but father; but not one of them recognized me. They gazed upon me with wonder, curious to know what the stranger wanted. I was dressed in the latest style of that day. I did not recognize my sister Kate until she arose from her chair to offer it to me. She had always been lame from a child. Then came the auspicious moment of introduction.

The minister, in a low voice, said, "Permit me to introduce to you a gentleman from Boston by the name of Jones." They bowed very kindly, and my sister Kate, who was my senior in years, came and shook hands with me, and looked steadily into my eyes and face, and I noticed the color change in her cheek. I managed, by strong will, to restrain the emotions of my heart, and remained silent, listening to the conversation of my mother and the minister in the Welsh language, which I had almost forgotten.

He said to her, "Do you not know that man?" She replied, "No, I never saw him before." At her words my heart seemed to break all to pieces. I could not control myself any longer and sank down on my knees with my face in my hands, sobbing and weeping bitterly, to their



great astonishment. Suddenly, by an uncontrollable impulse, I sprang up and threw my arms around my dear mother's neck, and in my native tongue said with a loud voice, which I could not restrain, "Mother, I am your own boy, Robert." She then drew me to her bosom and kissed me again and again, seeming unwilling to let me go. And there were embraces, while tears of joy flowed from the eyes of brothers and sisters, who pressed around me and fell upon my neck, vying with each other to see who would caress me most, and show me that love they had always felt for their brother they had long since deemed lost to them forever. My sister Kate then said: "I thought it was my own brother, Robert." I thereupon kissed her and all of them again, and my dear mother more than them all. It was a joyous time that night in that humble dwelling in York Mills. Father came home later on, and he seemed glad to see me, but he never had the love for me in his heart that my mother did. It was about twelve o'clock when the minister left us for his home. Before parting he closed the joyous occasion with prayer, although at that time my heart was far away from God. Yet I was glad I had returned to see them all once more. I remained only two days, and then retraced my steps to Utica, to the hotel and my work as clerk and barkeeper. I drank frequently all the time with my companions in sin and wickedness. Here I became acquainted with ex-Governor Seymour, also with Roscoe Conklin, who was then but a green country boy studying law, but who became so distinguished afterward. Here I met John Butterfield, the man who started the first express train across the continent.

I knew his sons also, and prepared them many a gin cocktail, and I always drank with them. I mention these persons as living at this time of my life, although many

of them are now on the other side; passed on and have given in their accounts. We are here to-day, but soon we will be in the great to-morrow.

Time levels all things, we all have a tombstone before us, a hearse and an open grave. This record of my life will be read, may be, after I am gone, perchance many years hence. I pray that it may influence some one to turn from the evil of his ways, and seek that Savior whom I know is life everlasting. I remained in Utica about a year and a half, and then left for Syracuse, taking a position there as office man and barkeeper in the Exchange Hotel. After three months I returned to Utica and went on a great spree, drinking and carousing around the city, and not once visiting my mother, at York Mills, as I did not think I had time. The old Goliath, king alcohol, got hold of me, and all I did for a time was to drink, fight and gamble.

I was now growing worse and worse all the time, losing all self-respect and restraint, even under the shadows of my mother's home, and almost within the sound of her prayers. I will mention one or two instances that occurred at this time, while I was in Utica, to show how low I had fallen, and the results of drinking and keeping bad company. My associates were both good and bad, and having some of my father's combativeness (for he was known in Wales as a fighter), I was quick and sudden in a quarrel, and never would give up unless I was well whipped. I fought with some noted roughs in the city. I will mention the names of some of them. Lou Dixon, a noted pugilist, who is dead, and has filled a drunkard's grave; Billy Harwood, whose blood stained the curbstone in front of the theater in Utica for many days; Thos. McElwain, brother of the chief of police, who was known as one of the worst characters in the city. He insulted

my sister by calling her limpy Kate. I determined to kill him at the very first opportunity, as I was her champion, and I determined to have vengeance on him. I deliberately walked into his saloon with a loaded cane prepared for the deadly work. I found him with his bar-keeper alone, and with one blow I tried to strike his head. He dodged and Providence prevented my becoming a murderer, for the head of the cane went through a green panel shade instead, which was smashed to pieces.

He seized hold of me, and with the assistance of his barkeeper tried to gouge out my eyes with his thumbs. He had both arms around me, but I broke away from him, and having on my right hand a large, solid amethyst ring I made straight shots at his nose and cut him terribly with the ring, until his face became badly disfigured. He was a handsome man, but then his friends would hardly have known him, and he belonged to a good family. His brother, Robert McElwain, was chief of police of the city and was beloved by all who knew him. But I will draw the curtain upon such scenes as these, and would be glad if I could efface them from my memory forever, because I am not now what I was then, and I thank God for it. The great change that has been wrought in my life and character is by the influence of the Holy Spirit. I left Utica after this fracas with McElwain and returned to the old United States Hotel in Boston, where I had acted as bell boy. But before going I wanted to visit my dear aged mother once more, and went to York Mills to see her. We were invited to take tea and spend a part of the afternoon with the same old minister who had gone with me to my home on my first visit there. We had a very pleasant visit, but I could not speak Welsh very well and could not converse as I wished to. Bidding the minister and his excellent family good-bye we started for our

home. I told her to lean on my arm for we had a quarter of a mile to walk. She talked with me about my future life, giving me admonition and advice such as none but a saintly and devoted mother could give to her boy whom she loved, and for whom she was willing to die in order to save.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, the stars were shining brightly, and the moon seemed to glide along among the clouds which were so beautiful in their fleecy whiteness. Nature was in her loveliest garb, and everything was still in the little village as we approached the cottage that mother called her home. She being a little weary, we sat down to rest a while by the garden gate facing the graveyard near by. She talked with me in her sweet voice about her approaching death, for she had an incurable disease and thought she could not live much longer. She said to me: "My boy, Robert, I want you to make me a promise before you go away to Boston; that is, to get ready to meet me in heaven, and God helping you to keep your brothers and sisters together after I am dead, for I am sure you and I will never meet again in this world, I shall be in the graveyard before you come again—pointing toward it with her thin finger, which set my heart rapidly beating and brought tears to my eyes. I replied, with a sincere desire of heart and purpose to keep the promise at whatever it might cost me: "*I will*, Mother; *I will*, God helping me."

She kissed me and then we went into the house. The children were all in bed, except Kate; my father had also retired. My mother read a few words in the Bible, and then we knelt down and I said the prayer that she taught me in our old home in Wales. It was the last time I heard my mother pray. Her voice trembled and putting her hand on my head she offered a fervent

prayer that God would guide and bless me. The next morning came and it was the last time I saw my mother alive.

I kissed her and the children good-bye, and with a sad heart started again to leave that loved spot where my heart lingered and where was then my greatest treasure—a mother's love. I never thought for a moment but that I should see her again.





## CHAPTER IX.

### SAD NEWS.

I returned to Boston and after I had been there about a year, while I was attending to my usual duties, one day a telegram was handed me by the clerk of the hotel. I opened it with trembling hands and found it bore the sad news of my mother's death. It read: "Mother is dead. Come." I was dazed, and began to weep. I could hardly believe it. "Mother's dead!" The words went like a dagger to my heart, and I went to my room and wept. I read the telegram over and over again and again to assure myself it was no mistake, but I found it too true. I found on inquiry that the telegram had been delayed, but I took the first train for Utica, and arrived at York Mills about 6 o'clock in the evening, and saw as I entered the house the old rocking chair my mother used to sit in by the fireside, but it was empty. Mother had gone. She was not there. It seemed to me that everything in the house looked dull and gloomy, and that the lights burned dimly, and my heart was draped in mourning, sorrow and tears. Father wept, brothers and sisters wept, for it was the first time we had ever been together without mother.

You may break, you may shatter, the vase if you will;  
But the scent of the roses will linger there still.

There was the fragrance of the loving kindness of her heart lingering with us still, although she had gone and

was asleep in the grave. That evening after we had composed ourselves as best we could, submitting ourselves to the will of God, we all went into the graveyard, father, brother, and sister Kate, to the lonely spot where the remains of one we loved and who loved us began her long sleep, pillowed on the breast of mother earth, for her spirit had taken its flight with the angel of love to the sweet resting place of the Paradise of God, there to remain until the last trump shall sound on the Resurrection morning.

I knelt down at that lonely grave and shed tears of remorse and repentance that I had ever grieved that faithful heart that so loved me, and I kissed the little violets, rosebuds and daisies that had been gathered by my sister Kate in sweet remembrance of her that was gone. She, like the flowers, had faded away from our sight, and was transplanted to bloom again by the side of the tree of life on the banks of the river that flows from the throne of God, in the Celestial City.

For Christ says: "I am the way, and the truth and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live again."

I found that my mother had been dead two weeks, to my great sorrow and disappointment, when I arrived home. The telegram they sent had been delayed and had not reached me in time for the funeral.

While I was at my mother's grave the remembrance of my promise made a year before to her came to me, that I would keep my brothers and sisters together.

The last words my mother said to my sister Kate were these: "Keep a good home for Robert;" then she pointed her finger toward heaven while her face shone like an angel, and exclaimed "I am going home. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

She then fell asleep with a sweet heavenly expression on her face. Her exemplary Christian life and death is well remembered and often spoken of by her old neighbors and friends at York Mills to-day. Again I had to take leave of my home, father, brothers, and sisters Kate and Anna, and from that memorable spot in the little graveyard so sacred to my heart, for there lay one who had given me life and who had showered a thousand blessings upon me, unworthy as I was.

She who had given me the last kiss and benediction, praying that God would keep and shield me from temptation and sin, I should now feel more than ever her blessing following me wherever I journeyed.

Bidding them all good-bye I started for Utica, going from there to Albany, where I found employment in the old Stanwix Hall, one of the best hotels in the city. I became the general clerk and barkeeper. E. L. Britton was the proprietor and is now living in Washington, D. C., connected with one of the hotels there. He was a very kind man to me, and although I was generally under the influence of liquor, yet he was always a gentleman.



## CHAPTER X.

### GAMBLING LIFE.

I want now to refer to my gambling life. I drank more or less all the time despite my good resolutions, or my dying mother's prayer, for I had not the love of God in my heart sufficient to keep me from evil doing. I thought of Him as my mother's God, not mine.

I was perfectly infatuated with the game of faro, that game of chance which has ruined so many men, both young and old. I had become acquainted with Deeply Dodge, one of the noted gamblers of that day, who was then quite an old man. No doubt the name will be familiar to many, even at the present time.

I became an expert in faro, also in three card monte, having received lessons from the champion of that game, Adam Clark, of Buffalo. I made a trip to Washington, at this time the capital of our nation, to visit the great gambling palace of that celebrated pugilist, John Morrissey, who was a noted gambler as well as a congressman. I had met him before when I was Dr. Hunn's office boy, in Albany.

In Washington I became acquainted at the faro bank and short card rooms, and was surprised to meet so many distinguished men, senators, lobbyists from nearly every state in the Union, who were winning or losing fortunes nearly every day, at the various games.

The entrance to one of these gilded palaces of iniquity is guarded by colored servants, dressed in livery, who

allow no one to pass in the wicket door who has not the password. Once inside it is like a king's palace in its splendor. Massive mirrors extend from the floor to the ceiling, gobelin tapestries, beautiful marble statuary and costly paintings of all descriptions, many from nude subjects, executed by the most celebrated artists of the world, the finest articles in art, rich velvet carpets, Turkish rugs from the Orient, cut glass decanters filled with the choicest of wines that would by their high sounding names disguise if it were possible their terrible effect, that of bringing a soul to the confines of hell, and the sufferings of the damned. There were elegant tables, brilliantly gilded ceilings that reflected costly chandeliers, until to my distorted imagination it seemed radically beautifully lighted. A delicious lunch was spread to all, consisting of oysters, lobsters, turkey, English pheasants—all the heart could wish, or an epicure crave, of which the great lawmakers of the land partook, who, themselves, broke the laws they had made and who frequented these places, going in and out under cover of the night. It is a sad commentary on some of those who represent the nation at Washington, who are merely intemperate political gamblers.

It is high time that the great game of faro, which is a dead fraud, should be changed to a square deal between God and man, and the only way this can be done is to "fear God," for this is the beginning of wisdom.

And here I quote from one of the papers at Great Falls, Mont., the *Great Falls Tribune*, after its editor had heard one of my experience lectures entitled, "A Barrel of Whisky, or Whisky Is Good in Its Place," as follows: "The First M. E. Church was packed last night to listen to the story of 'Mother's Bible,' as told by Evangelist Williams, who has been on the 'turf' for forty-eight years as a



gambler, pugilist and all-around sinner after Satan's own heart. It has been eleven years since he challenged King Faro with a 'stack of blues,' but since that time he has been industriously devoting his energies at play in the great faro game of life, in which his Satanic majesty is 'dealer,' where human actions represent 'chips,' where Christ is the 'case keeper' and where God is the universal 'lookout.' Souls are to be won or lost in this great game of life.

"It might be stated for the benefit of those who have never worshiped at the shrine of 'King Faro,' that it is not the business of the ordinary earthly 'lookout' to assist the 'dealer' in losing any bets. It is different, however, in the universal 'bank' of life, where souls are at stake, and where the omniscient 'Lookout' (?) divine is watching the game with a scrutiny that never tires.

"Evangelist Williams is aware that the devil as 'dealer' makes the most of the 'splits,' and plays a 'brace' game when possible; he knows also that Christ has the 'cases,' and that when the last 'deal' has been made, the 'turn' been called and the 'rack' empty, it is then that the great 'Lookout' of the universe smiles approvingly as the glad news is heralded in heaven that the devil has lost his 'bank,' is irretrievably 'broke,' and it has been approved by the supreme court of a new Eden.

"After nearly half a century in 'bucking the tiger,' Evangelist Williams is desirous of giving the remainder of his life in aiding mankind to employ the most efficient methods of saving their souls, and in paralyzing the hand of Satan, who is continually making 'terms' at the faro bank of human existence. The speaker believes that God's 'system' alone can win in this faro game of life, and that all human action must be 'coppered' accordingly."

## CHAPTER XI.

### JOINS THE Y. M. C. A.

From Washington, D. C., I went to Cape May, where I became acquainted with Harvey Cleveland, of Philadelphia. He had a chateau or gambling cottage situated on a beautiful lawn by the seaside. He was an exceedingly affable gentleman, and kind hearted, as many of the gambling men are, and was considered a square dealer. He died, however, a very poor man, after a long life of gambling. He had in his lifetime won and lost great amounts of money. I also became acquainted with Joseph Hall, who is known by most of the sporting fraternity and turf men in America. He was at one time the owner and proprietor of forty-eight gambling houses in New York, where all kinds of games, great and small, could be played, from twenty-five cents up to hundreds of thousands of dollars. He married a beautiful dancer and actress, the daughter of Peter Inch, who was secretary to Boss Tweed, that man who defrauded New York City of so many millions of dollars. Joseph Hall at this time owned the fastest team of horses in America. The last time I heard of him he was living with his son in Baltimore, having lost all his money. This ends the account of my association, for a time, with this class of men, with the exception of some I knew in Boston, viz., Robert Banks, a brother to Gen. N. P. Banks; Bill Mead, now in Buffalo, and Joe Brown, all of whom were at that time in the gambling

ring in Boston. I returned to my hotel life and continued my drinking habits. After five or six months I became almost a raving maniac, and the authorities placed me in a strait-jacket, and put me behind the bars.

When I became sober and was released from jail, I resolved within myself not to touch another glass of liquor as long as I lived.

I thought by joining the Y. M. C. A. in Elliott street, which was the first society organized in America, that I could recover. I joined, and paying my yearly membership fee became one among them — a member of their society. And here, by the kindness of many of its members, I was led to live a sober life and give my heart to God. I thought I was saved by my own will, and gave a testimony to that effect in public for the first time in my life. I thought I was all right, and managed to keep sober all summer. That was the year that General Garfield was nominated for President of the United States, and, by the influence of a dear friend, who gave me a recommendation speaking of my connection with the Revere House, the U. S. Hotel, and the Albion, I became the manager of the Grand Pavilion at the famed Willows, near Salem, Mass. On the fourth day of July, our great opening day, we entertained twenty-five thousand people with clam chowder, oysters, lobsters, and a general fish dinner. It was during this year that the Jubilee Building was erected in Boston. Toward the close of that summer I had some difficulty with the manager of the Pavilion, Mr. Goodall, who was also president of the company, and with whom I had made my contract. Our accounts did not agree, he refused to pay me and there was trouble. I had justice on my side, and was determined he should do as he had originally agreed, which he was at length obliged to do. This disagreeable

matter, and my anxiety about the result, drove me back to my besetting sin—drink.

From *one* glass I soon drank to excess; my mind quickly succumbed and I was again like a raving maniac. I soon left Boston, taking the train for Portland, Me., and in a roundabout way finally arrived in Utica, for I longed to see my sister Kate. I had stopped in Portland a short time only, but had found even in that noted temperance town that beer and whisky could be easily obtained. So easily does Satan find means and ways to carry on his sinful work.

Drug stores and even the custom house, which was under the management of Neal Dow, the great temperance man, kept liquors, although unknown to him. Here the authorities got after me again, and I was locked in the same cell in which Francis Murphy was incarcerated during his last drunken orgy.

In the morning I was discharged after making the same promise he did, and by the help of God *he* was enabled to keep his, but *mine*, God forgive me, I broke in less than one hour.

I was burning up with thirst, craving, longing for it, trembling, and, to *me* it was either whisky or death. All this time I had a considerable amount of money about me and on the next day I took the train for Albany, staying there over night only, and in the morning continued on to Utica, my old home, fully intending to visit my sister Kate, for we had always loved each other, although I was a wayward, unworthy subject for her love. In Utica, after an absence of three years, I met many of my old companions in sin. Bill Caltin, my old chum; Chet Stafford, a noted gambler in that town; Black Martin and many others who knew me when I was the bully of the town, and for several days I was saturated with that

which destroys both soul and body. I became delirious and I never could forget my sensations at that time. It seemed that thoughts of death were uppermost in my mind, and there was no hope for me. I was totally bewildered and beside myself, and something said to me, "Leave Utica." And it was not a human voice, it also added, "Your life is in danger here."





## CHAPTER XII.

### A VISIT TO MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

About nine o'clock that night, as nearly as I can remember, I started on foot to leave the town. It was a cold, drizzly, rainy night, with some snow. I was trying to get away from temptation and my wicked companions, but there was something more in it than that. I thought if I could only get to the burial place of my sainted mother, that the fiends and phantoms that were tormenting me would leave me. But it was of no use; Satan, sorrow and death had taken hold of me. I tried to rise above my gloomy feelings, but could not. There was no help. I felt that I was damned. It was about twelve o'clock at night when I arrived at the little village. I could see no lights, and at the turn of the road near the city of the dead I stood for some time under a lamp post and communed with my own heart. I then climbed the little hill to the graveyard, the last resting place of my dear mother, where was once a little mound. Time had wrought its changes, and now it was only a little neglected hollow in the earth. I could see a few little daisies, and I kissed them, for they grew on the grave so dear to me. There seemed to be a spirit or influence around me that I could not define, whether good or bad, and it seemed to speak to me.

I said, "Cannot I, a poor, miserable drunkard, lay me down here by my mother's grave and rest and be no more

what I have been?" Something seemed to say to me, "Rest awhile with me." I was very tired, wet and cold, and I laid down upon the grave, thinking I could put my arms around my mother's neck.

I forgot my anguish and the chills for awhile, and tried to pray the best I knew how for God to save me *that hour* from a drunkard's grave.

I remained there nearly all of that dismal night, at times pacing up and down the grave, and I saw no worse spirit than my own. How thankful I am *now*, that my *dear mother* never saw *her boy drunk*.

About five in the morning the rain and snow ceased and day began to dawn, and with many good resolutions for reform I left that spot fully determined, but in my *own* strength, to drink no more. But Oh, how frail and weak is the *will* of a *drunkard*.

I found my family had moved away from York Mills to Wisconsin. I had no home there any more. Walking back to Utica on the tow path of the canal, I made many promises and resolutions, which I thought I could keep. But in less than an hour after I had arrived in the city they all vanished and fled, together with all thoughts of my dead mother. The vow was broken indeed, and my wicked appetite again placed the cup to the lips that had so often been pressed by those of my dead mother, which were now forever closed and cold in death. I remained in Utica a few days and then set forth for the west, drinking all the time.

I arrived in Buffalo and found my brother William, who was living there with his family.

I had not seen him for sixteen years. In the meantime he had married and had two children, whom I learned to love. I decided to remain here for a time and recuperate a little if possible, but I continued to gamble

and made a great deal of money, and succeeded in keeping sober. But I learned to my sorrow that my brother loved the accursed drink. I went occasionally to Niagara Falls, to the Thousand Islands, Montreal and other places in Canada. I remained in Buffalo two years and lived like a king with my fast horses and everything of a worldly character. I had plenty of money, which I could always win by gambling. My brother was also of a sporting disposition, but could not be a professional like myself. In Buffalo I became acquainted with a beautiful woman, the widow of a Mr. Jordan, of Troy, N. Y., and, as birds of a feather flock together, we had a gay time. She finally left Buffalo for St. Louis in company with a very stylish young man, who was also a gambler and fond of fast horses. I learned of their address through my friend, Ed Hazard, who was a son of Captain Hazard, very well known in Buffalo. Ed was a sporting man like myself.

Although he had a good father and mother, he spent all of his fortune in gambling, and when I heard of him last he was a beggar on the streets. The old saying had proved true in his case at least: "The fool and his money are soon parted." I visited St. Louis six months after this lady and her friend had gone there, and I called upon them. We had some dispute together, which came near terminating in murder, but, as Providence overruled it, no blood was shed. They lived in a beautiful palace, but their pleasure was of short duration, as their fortune soon passed away. Her so-called husband became reckless with drink and lost all the money he had. He took all her jewelry and diamonds and gambled them away, and at last left her and went to New Orleans, leaving her friendless, penniless, sick and alone.

Learning that I was in the city, she sent for me to call

upon her, which I refused to do at first, but since she was sick and in need and at the point of death, I, with my friend Grant Duff, called to see her. A great change had come over her. Once she was the belle of Buffalo and had many admirers, but now her beauty had faded and I hardly recognized her. I asked if she needed any money and she said, "No; I have enough furniture in the house to pay my funeral expenses, but I have one request to make of you, if you will grant it." I asked what it was. She replied: "I want to be buried in a shroud you have purchased for me." I did not think she was going to die very soon, and said, laughingly, pointing to my friend, "Mr. Duff will send you a shroud if you need one, and it will be charged to me, but I expect to see you alive and well again." She replied, nervously, "No; I must have it and I will make it with my own hands."

We left her house, and soon after I went to Cincinnati, not returning for some weeks, when I learned she had died and was buried in a shroud sent to her by Mr. Duff, and for his kindness to her I gave him a sum of money, not for the shroud but its equivalent.

This verifies the truth that sin is a hard master, "and that our sins will soon find us out."

"The wages of sin is death;" that "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto death, and many there be that walk therein."

That the pleasures of this world do not satisfy the soul, and they soon vanish away. "But the gift of God is eternal life." "Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth to eternal life, and few there be that find it."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCES.

To show the wonderful care that God has over those whom He loves and how He protects and guides them, directing their steps, and watching over them, I will relate a scene of horror of which nearly all the world knows, as it is without a parallel in the history of railroad disasters. I refer to one that occurred at Ashtabula, O., some years ago, where so many noble lives were sacrificed, and among them the celebrated singer and evangelist, P. P. Bliss, and wife. Had it not been for a kind Providence I would have been among the number who went down in that terrible holocaust. I was in Buffalo at the time, and on the night of the calamity was to have taken that same train for Cleveland. It started at 9 o'clock. I had been out visiting Mrs. Stockley, a sister of my brother's wife, for two or three days, and had spent the time very pleasantly. In the evening a little company of friends had been invited to tea. Among them were the express messenger and fireman who belonged to the ill-fated train. I remained with the company after the other two gentlemen had gone, and continued on in the evening's entertainment, drinking, smoking and playing cards. At 8 o'clock I called for my satchel, and told them I was going down to the depot to take the train, as I had already purchased my ticket. But soon there came up a terrific snow storm, and Mrs. Stockley said: "Uncle Bob, you cannot go to-night, for it is too stormy." But I said I must go, and took



my satchel, cane and umbrella and started toward the door. Mrs. Stockley followed me and said: "You are not in a condition to go out in this storm, I shall not allow you to go." And she took the satchel away from me, but I secured it, and again the second time she took it out of my hand, and this time kept it.

I can now see God's hand in it. I was compelled to remain, for I had been drinking all day and was in no condition to buffet the storm or start on a journey.

If I had not been forcibly detained, I should certainly have lost my life with all those poor unfortunate passengers on that doomed train. By the next day I was sober, and took the train for Cleveland. On arriving at Ashtabula, the scene of the disaster, we were obliged to take the stage through the city to the opposite side, where we remained three hours before the train was ready to leave for the West. We looked on the wreck at the bottom of the gulf, also inside the tool house, where we saw many of the bodies of those who had perished lying about on the floor, distorted, disfigured, and in all manner of shapes. Here, too, was the body of the express messenger who had been drinking and carousing with me only the night before; and the body of the fireman also, who bade us good-bye so gayly only a few short hours before. The hotels in the city were filled with the friends and relatives who had come to look among the ruins and the wreck for their missing loved ones. I will now give an account of several hairbreadth escapes I have passed through, and it is owing to the mercy of God that I am spared to give this autobiography of my life which will show so plainly God's wonderful dealings toward me, unworthy as I was.

On one occasion, when I was stopping at Allentown, Pa., I went to Slatington for the day to visit some of my country people. I had been drinking, as usual, and con-

sequently not able to walk straight. Had I been in my right mind, I should not have attempted walking home on the railroad. However, with the foolhardiness of a clouded intellect, I started with my hands in my pocket, and my eyes looking down toward the ground. I heard a voice say: "The fast express is coming." I did not heed the warning, and continued on the track. All at once something seized hold of my arm and giving me a sudden jerk, pulled me out of danger, and saved me from a drunkard's death—from hell itself. "For no drunkard shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." At that moment the train passed me, the locomotive brushing my clothes as it passed. A young man had seen my danger and rushed to the rescue. He put his own life in jeopardy to save mine, a worthless drunkard. He was an angel of mercy, and God's hand was in it.

Another of my hairbreadth escapes occurred when I was in New York, my old hunting ground of sin. One evening, in a saloon called the "Three Horseshoes," which was located in Bleeker street, and kept by Harry Lawrence, a noted gambler from Chicago, I was stabbed in the mouth, which made a hole in my lip and knocked out three of my teeth. I next had an encounter, a regular rough-and-tumble fight, with Mike Trainor well known in New York, who kept a pugilistic school on Eighth avenue.

I carry the marks of that affair to-day on my face, and will as long as I live.

The next time I got into difficulty was when John Morrisy was running for senator.

It was his last political campaign, for he died shortly afterward and never took his seat in the senate. I was electioneering for him. I always had a great admiration for a brave man, and hated, correspondingly, a coward. In electioneering for Morrisy in the Sixteenth Assembly dis-

trict, I became involved in a difficulty with some politicians and was struck in the forehead with a beer glass, which almost fractured my skull and left a scar which can be seen to this day. After receiving this dangerous blow, which almost took my life, I found myself one morning in an old shed on the Hudson river, three miles from New York. How I came there I could not tell. I had been asleep, and was very weak from the loss of blood. I could hardly walk. Some one kindly helped me wash the blood from my face and directed me to the West End hospital, where I had the wound sewed up and dressed. The surgeon advised me to go to the police headquarters and get permission to go to Bellevue hospital, for I had caught a severe cold and my eyes and head were badly swollen. They would not receive me there, but gave me a pass to go on the island. Here my name and residence were discovered, and my wife and mother-in-law saw it in the papers. They did not come to see me, however, nor did they make any inquiries. After remaining there two weeks I returned home, although scarcely able to walk or sit up. There I was taken with a violent fever, and for two months hovered on the brink of eternity, filled with forebodings, and out of my mind a good portion of the time. I was kindly cared for by my good wife and soon recovered.

I married the daughter of Harriet H. Berry, who formerly resided in Saratoga, N. Y., and kept the old National hotel for some years, also Dr. Bedorthy's water cure. My wife was born in Bennington, Vt., which was the home of Jim Fisk, also. They had been schoolmates. She is kindly remembered among the poor and needy, both in New York and Chicago. We lived at No. 183 West Eleventh street, New York, next door to the St. Vincent hospital.

I left New York and took my wife west to visit my people, who were then living in Watertown, Wis. Here my first and only child was born, a little untimely boy. God in His mercy claimed him early, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." It was a bitter blow to me, but I have learned since that time to say, "Thy will be done," and not "mine." And now, dear reader, will you go with me out to the little Welsh graveyard, four miles from Watertown. The snow is deep, the ground frozen, the wind is cold and chilly. There is no minister to offer a prayer, no hearse, no funeral train, but in company with a long, long-tried friend, we hollowed out the little grave and laid the casket within. We then covered it over with earth. It was all that we could do, dust to dust and earth to earth.

Dear little hands, I loved them so!  
And now they are lying under the snow—  
Under the snow, so cold and white  
I cannot see them, or touch them to-night.

Dear little hands, when the Master shall call,  
I'll welcome the summons that comes to us all—  
For I know in a happier, heavenlier clime,  
Those dear little hands, I shall clasp some time.

If I keep my eyes fixed on the heavenly gate,  
Over the river where white-robed ones wait,  
I shall know you, I'm sure, among those bright bands,  
For you beckon me ever, oh! dear little hands.

I did not know how to pray, but that graveyard became a memorial place to me, for it was the casket of some of my precious jewels. My dear sister Kate, who was nearer and dearer than any of my brothers or sisters, and who used to say so often, "dear brother, don't drink any more to-day," was the only one who had not discarded me. She held to God's promises, and con-



tinued to pray for me, and also that my mother's prayers might be answered. And here I give a few verses which I have written to the memory of one who used to say: "Don't drink any more to-day." That was my sister Kate.

Come, New Year, and strew pale roses around my sister's grave;  
 Love's kisses, heart and hands  
 Have ceased to say, O brother, dear brother, don't drink to-day.

Sleep, dear sister, sleep;  
 I have learned to say,  
 God helping me, I will drink no more to-day.

New Year, when thou art old,  
 Thou, too, forgot shall be, to wake no more;  
 Thy roses, thy violets, thy lilies so fair  
 Shall sleep in thy shroud of the past,  
 To return no more.

Lord, help the poor drunkard to say  
 (Sleep, dear mother, sleep);  
 God has helped the drunkard to say—  
 I'll drink no more to-day.

Sleep, dear father, sleep in thy narrow bed,  
 Pillowed on thy mother earth,  
 Till God's great sunlight shall melt thy mantle of frost and snow,  
 And bring to bloom on thy grave, roses and violets and lilies, too.

Spirit of the dead,  
 Help the drunkard to say,  
 I'll drink no more to-day.

Sleep, dear brother, sleep,  
 God has called thy spirit home,  
 With father, mother, and sister, too;  
 Pillowed 'neath thy earthly tomb,  
 The trumpet shall sound,  
 And the echo shall be,  
 Glory to Jesus,  
 We shall drink evermore of thee.

Sleep, dear father, dear mother, brother, sister, I love,  
 Spirit of God, help the drunkard to say,  
 I'll drink no more from this blessed day.

R. G. WILLIAMS.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### RETURN TO THE EAST.

After a year I returned again to the east, leaving my wife behind in Wisconsin. I started again on a gambling tour, and visited Utica, my former home. I soon became completely under the power of Satan, continuing at the bottle until I lost all self-respect, and there was no restraint. I was soon filled with the cursed liquid. The time soon came when I felt drawn to visit that dearest spot on earth to me, my mother's grave. It was in early summer, about the time of harvest. The new mown hay filled the air with sweet perfume, and all nature seemed joyous and happy. I had started from a gambling house and saloon to walk to that sacred place, which was four miles from Utica, and as I wandered along on my journey different thoughts passed through my mind. Some of the time I was very sad, and then I would try to sing a song I had heard my mother sing so often :

That a bird retains its note  
Tho' bondage chains its wings.

My song was not a happy one, for I was saddest when I sang. I arrived at the graveyard about two o'clock in the night and entered the gate. I could see a change had taken place, for ten years had elapsed since my last visit there. On my right stood a tall, beautiful monument, and looking at the inscription I saw it was the monument of Mr. Campbell, the millionaire; and on my

left I saw another monument equally as beautiful, a masterpiece of the sculptor's art. On it was the name of William Walcott, the founder of the great cotton mill at this place. These monuments pointed heavenward, where the spirits of those had gone whose bodies lay slumbering beneath them.

The full moon shed its radiant light on all around me, and the stars vied with each other in brilliancy, which had an influence on my spirits and tended to make me more cheerful. My mother's grave lay between these two great monuments. It was only a little hollow in the ground now. There was a little stone at the head, and a few wild flowers and spears of grass growing on the grave. I thought as I looked at those tall monuments there and the little grave between them, of the words in God's book:

"The rich and the poor shall meet together, but the Lord is the maker of them all." When the grave shall give up the dead on the resurrection morning whose shall they be? The bride's jewels awakening in His likeness. Death levels all things, and the judgment day will prove all things. I lingered there until the morning dawned, my head resting on the earth for a pillow. My heart was disturbed by memories of the past and thoughts of the future.

The kind, loving words of my mother and acts of kindness, the sound of her voice in prayer for me, I fancied I could hear, caused me to shed many tears. I called her name, "Mother! Mother!" but there was no answer, save the gentle rustling of the leaves and the echo of my own voice.

But daylight came, the moon had gone down in the west and the stars disappeared one by one. Gray streaks of the morning lighted up the eastern sky and little birds

began to sing their morning songs. Brushing the tears from my eyes I prayed as best I could for my mother's God to guide and keep me, and looking at that sacred spot once more, not knowing but that it might be the last time I should ever see it, I said, "Good-bye, dear mother," and again started down the lane toward that city which I had left only a few hours before, fully realizing that I was a sadder, and, I flattered myself, a wiser man, but it was not so, for I was again engulfed in the sea of dissipation. I had not yet learned to say, "God helping me," I will drink no more to-day. I soon left Utica and went to Buffalo, and visited my brother William. He was the superintendent of the painting and papering department of the New York Central railroad. I was the means, in God's hands, of inducing him to remove to Wisconsin, where he met all of the members of the family then living except our brother John—my father, sister Kate, brother David and myself, together with several nephews and nieces. He had been absent from them nearly twenty years. This was the first-fruits of the promise I had made my mother to keep the family together. He located in Oconomowoc, the great Saratoga of the west, and lived there for many years, but was finally taken sick and died, leaving his excellent wife and a large family of children. Brother William was the first to be buried in the cemetery at Oconomowoc. He was a member of the Masonic order, a loving father, and died in the faith of his mother, for which we rejoice. His children are now passing away one by one. Jennie and Harvey are lying by his side, and a great marble slab marks their resting place to me, because I always loved my brothers and sisters.

One night, being under the influence of liquor, I wandered out to my brother's grave and laid down and fell asleep. I was found by his son Harry, who kindly took

me, half crazed as I was, to his home. He now sleeps in death by his father's side.

I will now take you, dear reader, with me to Detroit, Mich. In this city transpired some of the most thrilling incidents of my life. As was my usual custom I had made myself acquainted with the gambling fraternity immediately on going there, my sin-loving nature always choosing them for companions wherever I went. Members of the brotherhood are to be found in all large cities, constantly plying their trade—that of beguiling the simple and unwary into their clutches and gambling dens. They are always on the lookout for *new* victims who can be enticed into their ruin, robbing them of their money, corrupting their morals, ruining their souls, and slowly, but surely dragging them down to destruction and death. The incidents I now relate occurred in the years 1861 and '62, in Detroit.

I became the owner of some of the fastest horses in the city. One I called Brown Ned. He was a twenty-mile heat horse and, I had others, both pacing and trotting stock, which I had bought in Canada. Here I had two dangerous runaways. The first occurred in Windsor, across the river from Detroit, in company with a very dear friend, John Simpson Cox, who is now dead. At that time he was the paying teller of a branch of the Bank of Montreal, in Simcoe, Canada. I was driving two fast horses, a trotter and a pacer, called the Baccus Mares, which were owned by Daniel Conner, a livery man of Detroit. We had a race on the boulevard with another team.

Our buggy came in collision with another party who was also driving there, and barely escaped with our lives. We came near being thrown over a steep precipice into the river.



My friend was thrown out, his collar bone broken, and his arm dislocated. My upper lip was badly cut by my falling on the wheel, but on our return to the city I had the physician sew it up and it very soon healed.

The buggy was broken and it cost me quite a sum for repairs. The next accident of the kind occurred one Sunday evening while I was driving the same team, but I was under the influence of liquor. A great many people were then on their way to church and saw the accident, as I was going up Woodward avenue, in Detroit, at a rapid rate.

I unintentionally drove into a deep ditch where repairs were being made in the street. The horses were thrown violently upon each other and I on top of them. The owner of the team happened just at that time to pass by and helped me out of my difficulty.

But he began to curse and swear at me most emphatically for they were a very fine team and he feared they were ruined. Fortunately for both man and beast they were uninjured, but I had a bill to pay with a gambler's money. He said I should never have another team that he owned.

In the latter part of 1861 I was drinking with some of my old friends, John Cox and "Sporting Tom," Galliger, and "Big Headed Riley," and the Chappel brothers, all of whom are now dead.

After a long debauch I crossed over into Canada to Windsor. On my return to Detroit I found a statement in the morning papers that Bob Williams was drowned, for they had found the hat he wore in an alley near the river. In a few days, however, I again made my appearance on the scene and they found that Bob Williams was still in the land of the living, but, sad to relate, had been dead drunk.



At this time I lost very heavily at the gambling table, and my money was soon gone. I was so reduced I had to pawn my watch, then my diamond ring, next my ivory handle derringer pistol, and lastly, even my clothing, reserving only what I had on.

I continued under the influence of liquor. In pawning my pistol I had completely forgotten it was loaded. The pawnbroker was examining it very critically, and as he pulled the trigger it was discharged and the bullet struck me in my thigh, having gone through the lapel and the lining of my thick chinchilla overcoat, and four months afterward, when my sister Kate was cleaning the coat, she found the bullet lodged in its skirt.

I realized after all of these experiences and hair-breadth escapes that there was a higher power watching over me than I had as yet acknowledged even to myself, and that my life in being miraculously preserved so many times, God was protecting me for some greater purpose than had as yet been revealed to me.

I feel assured *now* that God, in His love and merciful kindness in not taking me while living a life of sin, preserved and saved me to tell the story of "Jesus and His love." Blessed be His holy name forever.



## CHAPTER XV.

### A SAD JOURNEY.

I wish to give here a short account of the first visit of my father and mother to Buffalo. It was for the purpose of searching for their lost boy Robert.

They came by stage from Kingston, a distance of twenty-five miles, bringing their furniture with them. They were decoyed there into a place called the "Terrace" by some emigrant agents, where the *old chest* which they had brought from Wales was broken open and its contents stolen.

It contained bed clothing and many other valuable articles, including the old family Bible, which, taken also, contained all of the family records, births, deaths, marriages, etc., and was of great value to the family.

My father was a stranger in the city and could not speak the English language, consequently did not take any steps to recover the stolen articles.

They returned again to Canada, not having found their missing son. They were disappointed, broken hearted and without any money.

When they arrived at Lewiston the kind-hearted captain with whom they came gave them a free passage back, where they remained three years longer, after which they removed to the United States and located at York Mills near Utica, in the state of New York. After the death of my mother, father married again, but his

wife was not kind to the children and drove them all away from home.

My little brother Tommy, learning that I was connected with a hotel in New York, came to the city and walked the streets night and day hunting for me. He slept in a dry goods box at night.

At last he found a home on board the sloop *Sea Bird*, sailing between New York and Newbern, N. C. The captain taught him many things, the most important being mathematics and navigation.

Sister Kate wrote me that I could find Tommy by inquiring of Jones, Smith & Co., the Stoney Brook millionaires of Long Island. I did so, and finally found him. I had not seen him for many years. I was about starting to Wisconsin, and induced him to leave the ship and go with me, which he gladly did. And there at Watertown we met all of the family then living. I had kept my promise to my mother, thus far. I bought Tommy a horse and sent him to school until the breaking out of the war, when he went south and shipped on the rebel ram *Merrimac*, commanded by his old friend Captain Carroll of the sloop *Sea Bird*. He served three years in the rebel army, was captured several times by the Union army, but always made his escape. He took part in many engagements during the war, but never received a wound.

Some time after my mother's death, my father made arrangements with a Mr. Lightbody, a fruit canning manufacturer, to take my youngest sister Annie until she became of age. This gentleman moved to Iowa and settled on a farm. She wrote to my father, after having been there a number of years, saying she was ill treated and was sick, that she was almost blind, having cataract on her eyes, and asked him to send for her. I accidentally found her letter, and resolved to go and bring her home,

which I did. I went to Iowa, to the little village of Columbia, and I found her living with a family by the name of Stewart, who were kind Christian people. My sister had left the place where she had been living and was treated so unkindly. She was delighted to see me, and glad that I had come to take her away. Mrs. Stewart lent her a cloak until we reached Chicago, when I returned it by express with our thanks.

I then purchased a handsome outfit for her, so she would be presentable to my friends in Watertown where we were going, all of which I purchased by money I had made in gambling. It made me feel easier that I had so far kept my promise to my mother, for now the last but one of the scattered family was on her way to sister Kate's home.

Our father's house was not a home to us, although he lived next farm to my sister. Here sister Annie remained until her marriage.

Her eyesight was restored by an oculist in Milwaukee and her general health was greatly improved. She married a young man by the name of Robert Lewis, who was a kind and loving husband. She has one daughter living, several other children having died, their remains were laid in the family burying ground where our father was also buried.

My niece is a lovely young lady, a consecrated Christian, and a member of the First Congregational Church in Watertown. Her husband's name is Woodard. She was happily married to the son of worthy Christian parents. He is one of the firm of Woodard & Stone, cracker manufacturers, so well known in the west.

After spending so long a time and so much labor, in searching and by correspondence I finally succeeded in getting all of the family together but one. Brother John

wandered away to the Pacific coast in the year 1850, during the great gold excitement to seek his fortune. Still remembering my promise to my mother to keep the family together, I laid the matter before God when alone in my room, for this was after my conversion. I had no knowledge whatever of his location or residence.

I prayed from a sincere heart that if brother John was living and unsaved, that I might find him, no matter where he might be, and that I might be the means in God's hands of bringing him to Christ, to acknowledge his sins at the foot of the cross.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.

Being in Chicago some time in the year 1870, I started the first fifteen cent dining room that was opened west of New York at No. 183 Randolph street. The cooking was all home made, and I was very successful in that line of business.

My partner was Mr. D. C. Thatcher, who finally sold out his interest to me, and later on I took his brother Frank in his place. He is now dead.

We succeeded for a while, but opposition and reverses came, and both of us being addicted to drink, we lost money and sold the restaurant to a Mr. Chamberlain, which gave us some money, and we concluded to gamble to see who should pay the debts of the concern. We did so, playing the best three out of five at euchre. I won the games and he had to pay the debts.

Next door to our place of business was located the Pierce livery stable, where Molly Trussel shot and killed her paramour, Mr. Trussel. She was sentenced to prison, but was afterward pardoned by the governor of the state.

The celebrated fast running horse, Dexter, was kept at this stable, owned by Mr. Trussel, but was sold to Robert Bonner, of New York Ledger fame, for \$100,000. I associated at this time in Chicago with some of the noted sports, Barney Nellis, Mike McDonald, and others whom I have not seen for years. Two years after this, in

1872, when I came back from Wisconsin, I began to drink with some of my old chums, and became wild and unmanageable.

I found myself one extremely cold night, near the stock yards, drinking and reveling with some of my own country people, one of them being my own namesake, R. G. Williams.

I went from one saloon to another until all my money was gone. I then pawned my rings, breastpin, watch and chain, and finally my beaver overcoat, which I sold for a few dollars in order to satisfy the terrible craving thirst I had for whisky. After all my money was gone, the saloon keepers, even my own people, had no more use for me, and they kicked me out of the door into the street. I was found about daylight the next morning by a kind-hearted officer. I had a big cut on my head, which had been done by a sling shot, and the beautiful snow was all spotted with blood which came from the wound.

This shows the heartlessness of these agents of hell, the saloon keepers, who entice the poor drunkard into the traps they set for him by offering free lunches, and after getting all of his money, clothes, jewelry and after destroying his character, they will throw him into the street.

Yet they are licensed to transact their nefarious business, and cities and corporations receive the money and use it in conducting the affairs of the city, thereby becoming partners in crime, and by so doing justify their acts.

When will this, the greatest of all curses, cease? In this so-called Christian nation, with all of the churches throughout the land with their steeples pointing heavenward, and all of the pastors in the pulpits and praying men and women in the pews, can it not be stopped? Is

there no God in Israel? Are His ears closed to the wails of the fatherless and the orphan? Does He not hear the widow's cry, as she gathers her little children around her to divide the last crust she has to offer them? Does He not sympathize with the poor drunkard, as Christ did with the man coming out of the tombs having a legion of devils, as He sees him struggling with a demon that the saloon keepers have kindled in his breast? If the pastors in all of our churches and all the Christian people would unite as one, and like Elijah on Mount Carmel, call upon God to put down this cursed evil, it would be done. And may God hasten that day.

The policeman put me into a van and took me before a magistrate, and I can remember his words to this day. He spoke to me very kindly, and advised me not to touch the accursed stuff any more, and said to the officer: "I knew Mr. Williams when he was a gentleman, and one of the best hotel men in the country. He can go free." I was delighted that I did not have to go to the bridewell.

The law is good and is often administered by kind-hearted men, and in many instances the officers of the law have assisted and befriended me when no one else did.

I went to Watertown again and settled there for a time with my wife, and, having some thoroughbred fast horses I enjoyed driving them, but did not gamble there as I had great respect for my sister Kate and her wishes. I took a cottage in the country and drove to town every day or two. But I continued to drink and paint the town red, as the saying is. In one of my drinking sprees I gave my fast horse and buggy to one of my neighbors, but my wife afterward reclaimed the property. Through the kindness of a livery stable keeper, Mr.

Humphrey, I was sent home, but the horse was locked up in the barn.

After getting a little sober at home, in a few days I returned to town again and drank harder than ever, as I had more money than brains. I had recently received one thousand dollars from Chicago, and in two weeks I spent two hundred dollars of it for drink. I became very unruly and lost all control of myself, became reckless and delirious, insomuch that the city marshal had to take me in hand, although he had drank with me, and I was taken before the judge for violating the city ordinance.

He sent me to the county prison for ten days, or pay a fine of sixteen dollars. I went with the officer to the jail and there found the sheriff, one of my most particular friends. He seeing me there told the officer to take me back to the city for he would not lock me up in a cell. I asked him to let me stay, for I wanted to get away from the demon drink. My conscience was troubling me, for it was not quite clear in my mind what I had been doing. The sheriff said he would resign his office before he would lock me up, and with his big heart in sympathy for me, made me a deputy sheriff and gave me the freedom of the city, so that I could do what I pleased, but that I was not to get drunk.

His excellent wife and daughters entertained me with music and singing and I sat at his table for ten days and did not drink. I honored him because he had done me such an act of kindness, one I shall never forget.

A few days after my return to the city I started out on another spree. For days it was nothing but drink, drink, drink, which I am well aware is a sad commentary on my strength of character. But, dear reader, I had no will power left. It was entirely swallowed up, drowned completely in the maelstrom of my wicked appetite for

the accursed drink. I soon realized I had lost my money. Where could it have gone? I had been in possession of eight hundred dollars before this drinking spree began.

After a long search I finally found it in the pantry where I kept my liquors. For I always had a supply of different kinds of drinks on hand for my own private use as well as to treat my friends.

I had made forty-two gallons of a very excellent quality of cherry brandy, which was stored in the cellar. How much to be regretted is the habit of so many of our people, especially those from the old country, when refreshment is to be offered to their friends it must be wine. Children will learn to love it, and bad habits are thus formed in early youth which can never be wholly removed until it is done by the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.





## CHAPTER XVII.

### LEAVE WISCONSIN.

But to return to my narrative.

I concluded to leave Watertown. I sold off all my possessions, horses, buggies, everything except my favorite dog, cat, piano, my wife, and my wearing apparel.

Bidding my friends and relatives farewell, we started for New York. We stopped on our way in the different cities, I continually drinking, as was my custom. We were eleven weeks in reaching our destination, and by that time I had only \$390 left from the money I received in the sale of our effects. We went to the home of my mother-in-law in New York, and I had not been in the city two weeks before the balance of my money was gone.

I had to pawn my silk umbrella, my meerschaum pipe, and I did not have one cent left. I was penniless.

That is what the love for strong drink will do for a man. It robs him of everything, character, health, respect, business, prosperity, friends, society, home, and all the blessings of life and drags his body down to an untimely grave, and his soul down to hell. "For no drunkard can inherit the Kingdom of Heaven."

I had some so-called friends in the city of New York who regarded the condition of my finances lightly. One of these special friends was a Hebrew, by the name of S. S. Wolf, a tobacco merchant. He gave me money and set me up in business.

He proved by his acts to be the Hebrew of the Hebrews, and a true friend, and is the same to this day. God bless him. He is at the present time one of the leading merchants of Saratoga, and is a very wealthy man. I think God did bless him for his kindness to me.

I continued to drink at intervals until the phantoms of hell were again haunting me night and day, and, dear reader, this is no vagary of my mind. I devoutly pray that God in His mercy will prevent and keep all who may read these lines from the accursed cup.

It is no idle tale that I am telling, these seasons of heart and soul anguish. I would I did not need to publish to the world such scenes as I have already passed through, but I must be a faithful scribe for the benefit of young men and all to whom I relate these experiences of my life, thinking they may be as way marks and guide posts along life's road to turn the feet of any who will be warned from the pitfalls and quicksands, and those death-traps to the soul—the saloons—those gilded entrances to hell, that are licensed by the laws of the land to do their deadly work. My case is not an isolated one. Victims of the accursed drink are numbered by the millions all over our fair country, and they suffer the torments of hell, according to the amount they drink, and the depth of sin to which they go.

Scores will testify as they read these pages to the truth of what I am saying, as the experience of all drunkards is the same the world over, and differ only in intensity.

The system becomes saturated, the blood poisoned, the nerves paralyzed, the brain fired with the burning liquid, and man becomes transformed into a demon and suffers the torments of the damned.

Are not our church members, pastors and Christian people responsible for this state of things? Or will we

have to wait until God raises up another Elijah, or a Deborah, a Barak, or a Gideon, who will go out in their strength and kill that giant sin and stay this deadly traffic in souls by the monster intemperance.

I was becoming very ugly and uncontrollable in the house, and my mother-in-law sent for a particular friend of mine, whom she thought would influence me for the better, a Mr. Isaac P. Chamberlain, then auditor of the Hudson River railroad. He had known me from a boy, and many times had loaned me money and given me passes on the road.

He came to see me at her request, and remained with me all night, for I had determined to throw myself down from the top of the house in order to end my life of torment.

The only way to prevent me from doing so was to humor me, which he did by sending to Park & Tilford's for two bottles of English brown sherry, one of the most expensive drinks. Soon afterward, and toward morning, he left me asleep.

I did not meet him again for upward of a year. It was under the following circumstances:

I owned a very valuable dog, a cross between a St. Bernard and a deerhound. I called him Prince. He was my traveling companion for years, and I loved him. One day, to my sorrow, he died. I sent his skin to a taxidermist to have it stuffed. It cost quite a large amount, but it was very handsome and perfectly life like.

I had it placed in the large hall. Some time later, when I was again on one of my violent sprees, I decided I would take my dog and go out west on a deer hunting expedition. I sent my servant to a large livery stable not far from the house and ordered two carriages, one for myself and another for the dog.

On their arrival I ordered the driver to put the dog into one of the carriages and I jumped into the other. I then ordered him to drive down to the Albany boat landing. My wife and mother-in-law both cried, but nothing they could do then could stop me. I was perfectly beside myself. I told the driver to hurry up and we started. My wife sent a messenger to the office of Mr. Chamberlain entreating him to go immediately to the boat and try, if he possibly could, to persuade me to return home again.

He at once drove rapidly down to the boat and found me at the bar drinking heavily, dressed in my hunting suit and all prepared for a long absence. My dead dog was in the baggage room in charge of the baggage master, who was to keep and feed him until we arrived at Albany, for which service I paid him two dollars and fifty cents.

Mr. Chamberlain was a little too sharp for me, for he invited me to go on the dock, saying he had some friends in one of the hotels to whom he wished to introduce me. I went with him and we drank together until after the boat started, for I had forgotten all about the dog and the contemplated journey.

He succeeded in getting me back to the house, and then telegraphed to Albany for the dog, which was finally returned after two weeks had passed, none the worse for his trip.

Mr. Chamberlain is now dead, but lives in the memory of those who knew him best and whom he had befriended. He never said "No" to me. I love to think of him as one who did what he could to turn my feet from a drunkard's path to one of life and peace. He is gone, but *I* still live by the mercy of God, and shall ever cherish his memory for all his kindness to me.

Mr. Chamberlain's widow and one lovely daughter survive him, and are blessed with ample means to continue their good works, for he died a millionaire. At his death he was the controller of the N. Y. C. R. R., and was what is called a self-made man.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ELEVEN YEARS IN THE LIGHT.

And now, dear reader, I have completed this narrative of my eventful life, which had been so wicked and so sinful up to the time that I was converted. A life of forty-eight years spent in sin, as a wanderer and as a hotel man, gambler, theater actor and drunkard. All of these terrible years I was a curse to myself and to the world, having taken the straight road to perdition, going down, down, down.

Had it not been for the prayers of my sainted mother, I would, no doubt, have been cut off and cast away, and at this present time my remains would be lying in an unknown grave.

It is a part of my life that I would have preferred forever blotted out of my memory. I have had a bitter, shameful experience that time and again has pained me to relate, knowing that so many of my old friends would read it. I present it to the world in the name of Him whom I now serve, hoping it will be a warning to all who "look upon the wine when it is red, for at *last* it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

If my experience can be the means of preventing one who will read these lines from the bitter experience I have had, or from his tasting the poisonous cup, and thus keep him from a life of sin, I shall be rewarded for what I have done in publishing this story of my life

The great change that took place in my heart and life, from my human nature's darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel of Christ, that now fills my soul, I call the transformation scene. A change from my old ways and habits of drinking, my old associates in sin and gambling, and from all that was terrible and wicked in the sight of God and man, to a new life in the service of Him which has brought me gladness of heart; has taken away the desire for strong drink, giving me a love for the word of God; has put a new song into my mouth, and a peace that passeth understanding.

This great change in my life was brought about by a good Christian lady in God's hands by the name of Miss Delia Crane, a city missionary of the Second Presbyterian church in Newark, N. J.

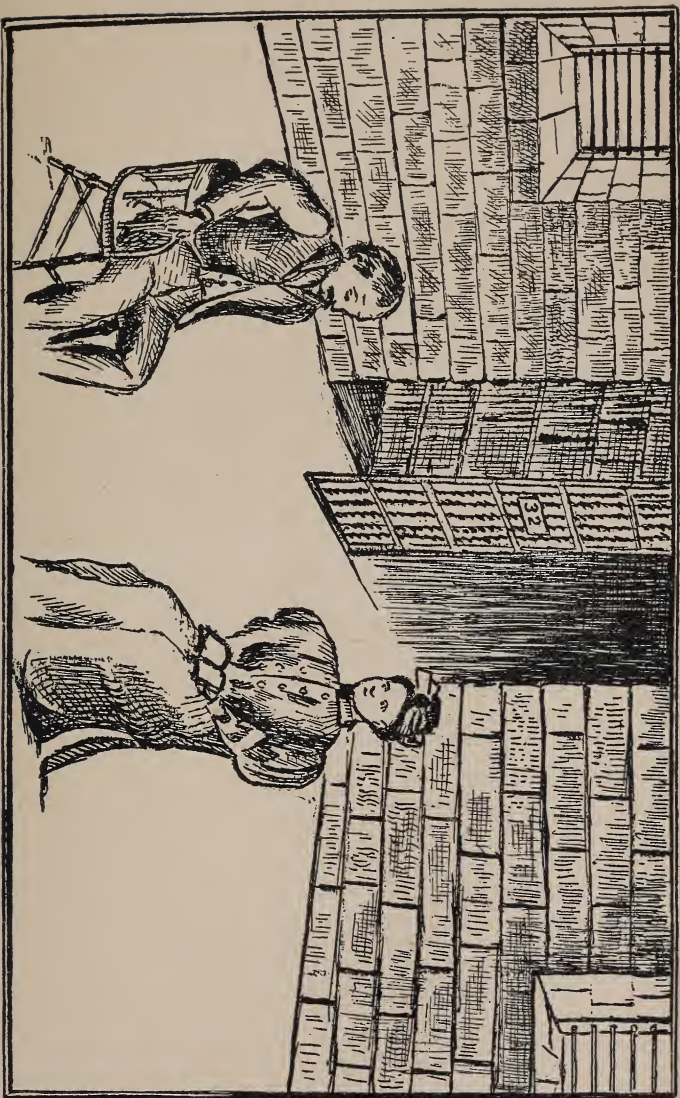
I had been incarcerated in jail there for misconduct while under the influence of liquor. My cell being No. 32.

Miss Crane came to me with the word of God in her hands, and read to me from the tenth chapter of Romans, the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth verses, and then prayed with me, and for me.

Like lightning down from the great throne of God, the fountain of light, those words descended into my heart and found lodgment there, cleansing me from sin, and made me a new creature in Christ Jesus.

I felt that my sins were forgiven, and I believed in Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and that most emphatically meant me. As she read to me I fell down on my knees, then and there, in that cell, and asked God to forgive, and entreated Him to save me from going down to death under the bondage of sin.

He heard our prayers, and suddenly I felt that a change had come upon me, and I rejoiced in God's mercy.



IN JAIL, NEWARK, N. J.



I experienced a change in my heart that I had never felt before, and I was happy.

I resolved to serve Him to the end of my days, who had thus kindly and lovingly saved me, and I resolved to do all the good in my power, and to try to be the instrument in His hands of saving others who, like myself, had wandered away into darkness and sin.

I then began to pity the drunkard, the gambler and the many prodigal sons. It was a wonderful change that came over me, and I regard that old prison cell in Newark with the greatest veneration and sacredness, for there the Lord came to me. I was released from the chains with which Satan had bound and kept me imprisoned for forty-eight years in sin and wickedness.

I went out of the prison a free man, rejoicing in the Lord. The appetite for strong drink had been taken away and I had no desire to go into a saloon. They were no temptation to me *now*. I was born anew. I had something better. What I once loved I now hated.

I went out from the prison with a light heart and walked up to the top of Orange Mountain, near by the city, and there consecrated my life to the service of God. From there I went to New York, where I had a friend by the name of Lewis Williams, although he was not related to me. He was a Christian gentleman and a member of the old Bedford Street Baptist church.

He gave me the position of night watchman of the building. While here I had an opportunity, the first one in my life, of bringing a soul to Christ, which gave me great joy of heart.

He was a poor refugee from justice, but had a good mother and sister who loved and cared for him. One evening, about eight o'clock, as I was standing in front of Earl's hotel, on Canal street, I saw a man picking cold



meats out of an old ash barrel on the opposite side of the street. My heart was touched with pity as I looked at him, for I had been hungry myself, although I never had to satisfy myself in just that way. I crossed the street and asked him to come over to the building where I was stopping.

He was afraid at first, but finally came, and I gave him plenty to eat and spoke to him about his soul. I gave him a little history of my life, and that brought us closer together. I asked him if he would not give his heart to the Lord, and quoted the verses that the lady had given me in the prison.

He was silent for a moment, then, as if the fountain of his heart had been opened, he told me, with tears in his eyes, about his mother and sister in Delaware; that he was running away from justice, and that he was perfectly willing to submit himself to the Lord, which he did then, and I put my arms around his neck, and asked him to pray the publican's prayer. He did so, and the Lord heard him. He gave his first testimony the next evening at the Brown Street Tabernacle, which was then my church home, and he was cared for by the Reverend Dooly, the pastor of the church. The next day this young man found work, and after laying up a little money, he left New York for Connecticut, a new man. It gave me great joy to think I had been permitted to bring one soul to Christ.

It was at this old tabernacle in New York where I had the first opportunity of standing in the pulpit to preach Christ, two months after my conversion. It was on a Sabbath night, and there was a large congregation, I told them of my life of sin and of my conversion in the old city prison at Newark, in cell No. 32, through the kindness of that godly woman, Miss Crane, and the influ-

ence of the Holy Spirit upon me. "Go ye into the byways and hedges;" "carry the gospel to the poor."

If the members of our various churches would do as they are commanded, seek out the lost and fallen visit the jails and prisons, speak kind words to the erring whom they meet so often, they would preach the gospel in so doing, and save many from a life of sin.

I began my gospel work on Bleeker street, in New York, in the Florence Crittenden Mission, which now has its branches in so many of the larger cities of the United States, having been established as a memorial to his little daughter, by Mr. Crittenden, for the purpose of saving young girls from lives of sin and shame, and to lift up the fallen sisterhood of his darling child. May God bless his labors.

I must here express my great admiration and sympathy as well as co-operation in this life-saving work, this double ministry to bodies as well as souls diseased, and thereby saving them from sin, degradation and death.

How thankful ought all Christian people to be that we have the Florence Crittenden Missions. How brilliant with the jewels of souls saved must be the crown of that angel child.

Women and girls, and whoever read this book, I say to you, *bless* the name of Florence Crittenden, and send up to the throne of God a prayer for the continued success of this particular mission work throughout the land.

At this time I commenced my labors in the mission under the supervision of Mrs. Prindle, one of those loving saint-like mothers in Israel to whom the hearts of young girls would open, as flowers open to the warm rays of the sympathizing sun. It was my pleasure to labor here without remuneration for nearly two years. I had plenty of money which I had saved from my salary

while a steward at the Fountain House, Waukesha, Wis., also while at the Long Branch hotel. This house was kept by Lewis Leland, Esq., one of that family so well known from the Atlantic to the Pacific as proprietors and managers of so many hotels established in different parts of the country, all being popular with the traveling public.

Mr. Lewis Leland was manager of the hotel by the same name in Chicago, where I was engaged as steward. He was converted, as I trust, through my feeble instrumentality, and the assistance of Brother and Sister Marks, who had charge of the Bethesda Mission on South Clark street.

They also rendered much valuable service at the hotel in the conversion of Judge Mattison, the old silver miner of Mexico, who was a friend of Mr. Leeland, and had once been very wealthy, but had succumbed to drink and lost all of his property. There was also a Mr. Oliver, a commercial traveler from Philadelphia, who attempted to commit suicide at the Leland hotel. He was converted through our efforts. We prayed with each of them, holding the meetings in one of the rooms. A Mr. Major, from Brooklyn, who was staying at the hotel, was also converted at that time.

I often attended the Bethesda Mission, at No. 406 South Clark street, one of the worst localities in the city, under the superintendence of Mrs. E. S. Marks, who was appointed by the ladies of the Central W. C. T. U. I shall never forget the interesting meetings and scenes I saw there. At one time as I entered the room I saw a number of men kneeling at the altar and Mrs. Marks teaching them to pray.

Many were converted at this mission. I was encouraged and helped in my work by this kind Christian lady.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### MISSION WORK IN NEW YORK.

A short time after this I visited New York, and continued my mission work in the slums and in the by-ways of that wicked city.

I will relate some of my experiences while in that place doing my Master's bidding. Will you go with me into one of the low places on the Bowery and witness the picture spread out before us?

The first scene is laid out in one of the old lodging house dining rooms. We will go down this pair of old, rickety stairs at the side of the Rising Sun saloon, near Cooper institute, and entering we find what is called a hash house.

It is in the cellar. A dingy, dirty place. One small lamp sheds its dim light, casting long, ghostly shadows here and there. An old table and a few chairs are all the furniture to be seen. A few broken dishes supplies the table. Here the hungry outcast, the midnight wanderer from off the streets, is served with a cup of poor coffee and *hash* for a trifling sum of money. I seated myself at the table and called for coffee and doughnuts. They brought them to me, and while I was sitting there I saw a man come in who had been one of my former companions in sin. He did not recognize me, however. His clothes were ragged and soiled. He was once the companion of Billy Arlington, George White of Christy's minstrels, and Matt



Peal. All of them were once my friends, for I used to take delight in minstrel song and plays, and this was Billy Pearce, once a noted minstrel.

He reached over and helped himself to the doughnut on my plate. I talked with him about the life he was living, and told him of Jesus and His love.

This was one feature of my work—trying to reclaim and hold up the Savior to my old companions in sin. One evening I went down the Bowery to Chatam and Pearl streets, and called at a clothing house to see one of my old time friends in sin, who had been the means of my going into many of the sinks of iniquity in that city. I preached to him the gospel of mercy and truth. I told him he must repent, if he did not *I* would be a swift witness against him at the bar of God in the day of judgment, for he had been like the arch fiend to me.

I finally brought him to confess Christ on his bended knee, and he trembled with emotion like a leaf, because the hand of God was upon him.

Later on, in a little W. C. T. U. meeting in Brooklyn, he was converted, and I rejoiced over it, because one of the worst enemies of my soul had been brought to Christ.

We will now go down to Cherry street, and into Mark Lanegan's whisky distillery and look at the scene there. It is one of the most horrible pictures imaginable.

Men and women of all ages, classes and conditions mingle together in a den of filth and iniquity. Old drunkards and street bummers, blear-eyed and scarred, ragged and dirty; women with their dresses half torn off from their bodies by street fights and drunken brawls, while little children also came, bringing their pails for beer or whisky to take home to mothers with some feeling of shame about coming themselves, but none whatever at sending their little ones into the midst of such sin



and drunkenness as was constantly being displayed here; clouds of smoke, odors of tobacco and rum, oaths and curses, fighting, disputing and drinking, and many continually blaspheming the name of God. All this constantly going on night and day throughout the whole year is a picture of Pandemonium, a type of hell itself, and is only one of many to be found in all of our great cities.

But there is a lighthouse even here. Through the efforts of Jerry Macauley, the reformed river thief, in his mission on Water street, many of these people are snatched as a brand from the burning. Saved from a life of shame to one of virtue and usefulness.

Before I left New York the last time I joined the old Jane Street M. E. church, so well known throughout the city, where Rev. Stephen Merritt was pastor, popularly known as an earnest Christian worker, a philanthropist, helping the poor and needy, the outcasts and fallen of that great city.

He took me under his care and said: "We will make you an exhorter in the M. E. church, Brother Williams, then you can preach the gospel wherever you go."

Some time after I received my license, and it was in these words:

### EXHORTER'S LICENSE.

ROBERT G. WILLIAMS, having been duly recommended, is hereby licensed as an Exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal church, subject to the requirements of the Discipline.

STEPHEN MERRITT,  
Preacher in Charge.

NEW YORK, June 5, 1890.

Some time after I received my license I went to Long

Branch to attend the duties as steward of that hotel, having some two hundred servants to look after besides other duties in the house.

I preached at Long Branch at intervals. My last sermon was in the Simpson Memorial M. E. church. My text was from the thirteenth chapter of Jeremiah, and my theme was "Pride and drunkenness."

Some of the servants at the hotel came to hear me and many seemed greatly benefited, for there was no more drinking around me after that. Some of the guests of the house were gamblers. They thought I was rather severe on them, but the sword of the truth will cut wherever it hits. Yet there is a balm that will cure, and that is the blood that was shed on Calvary.

I returned to New York and preached in the missions, also in the Fifth Avenue Baptist church, by the request of a dear friend, Eugene Sanborn, president of the Young People's Society of the church. I also spoke in Rev. Dr. McArthur's church.

I went to Mayo Park Falls on the Hudson and held my first revival services. It was strange work for me, but I had the gratification of seeing thirty souls added to the church. The pastor of the church was the Rev. Auckland Lord Boyle, who had formerly been an elocutionist and humorist.

I now made up my mind I would go west and search for my brother John, who was somewhere in California, and that I would preach the gospel as I traveled in the true apostolic way, without money and without price.

A farewell meeting was held in the old Jane Street church, and my friends came to bid me good-bye. The house was filled and it was a memorable night to me. Mrs. Prindle and many of my friends from the Florence Crittenden Mission were present to bid me God speed.

## CHAPTER XX.

### LEAVING FOR CALIFORNIA.

The Robert Brothers, the celebrated Welsh singers, were there and sang some of their sweetest songs. After the meeting, I bade them all good-bye, and started for Philadelphia, having only \$2.40 left in my pocket after I had purchased my ticket. That is the amount with which I started on my long journey across the continent. But the Lord always goes with His children and prepares the way.

At Philadelphia I assisted in a ten days' revival in the Rev. Dr. Lukes' church. I also preached in Dr. Graham's church, and in several of the missions in that city. I then continued on my journey to Baltimore, and held meetings four times on one Sabbath while there. From thence I continued on my journey by way of Washington, D. C.

During my short stay at this time in Washington, I had the pleasure of meeting with an old and dear friend, a lady whom I had not seen for thirty-seven years. Our last meeting had been at the theater when Forrest was playing one of his great roles, "The Chief of the Wautauogas." At that time I was a gambler and drunkard. She was a beautiful young lady, a daughter of one of the leading families of Bladensburg, Va., and a niece of ex-Governor Smith of that state. She married one of earth's noblemen, a leading real estate dealer in Washington, and a Christian gentleman.

This lady was a member of the Episcopal church, although when we first met neither of us had experienced anything of the love of God in our hearts.

She seemed pleased to see me, and rejoiced that I had found the pearl of great price. We knelt in her parlor and thanked God that each had tasted of the goodness of His love.

On leaving Washington I intended to go west immediately, having my heart set upon going as far as the Pacific coast. I went by way of Albany, however, and preached in the missions, and some of the churches wherever a door was opened for my ministrations, without making any pretense to eloquence of words or college training, or a knowledge of theology, but where I felt led by the spirit and guidance of One who had snatched me as a brand from the burning, from a life of sin to one redeemed by grace and the blood that was shed on Calvary. And I can thankfully say that I have never been hungry or without money since the time I gave my heart to God. Though brothers and sisters and relatives once had forsaken me, yet God has never left me, and during the eleven years that I have tried to serve Him the sunshine of His face has kept my heart warm, and I have found Him ever present to comfort and sustain me, and I have been mysteriously led by His divine spirit.

I continued my journey from Albany toward San Francisco. On my way I preached in Denver, Colo., Topeka, Kan., Kansas City, Leadville, Colo., and Salt Lake City in Rev. Dr. Iliff's church. Some of the very pillars of the Mormon church listened to my remarks of Christ and Him crucified. I hope they were profited; they were certainly attentive. There was Geo. Bywater the high priest, and Bishops Morris, Jones and Davis. They

offered me the use of the Mormon Tabernacle to preach in, which I refused, as they would not allow me to take the free will offering of the people, my usual custom, but they wished to pay me a stated sum. Before I left several were converted and two of the Mormons renounced polygamy.

I had the pleasure of visiting the great Mormon Temple through the kindness of Bishop Morris, who was its founder, and he also introduced me to many of his friends, some officers in the Mormon church.

While on the train near Provo, which was fifty miles from Salt Lake, I was introduced to Mrs. Lucy Gates, the favorite daughter of Brigham Young. She is an accomplished lady, and gave me much information regarding Mormonism, as well as a little history of Mr. Thomas, the governor of Utah, with whom many of the Mormons were not well pleased, on account of his opposition to their doctrine. She gave me an introduction to Bishop Whitney, the writer of the history of Mormonism. Upon leaving Salt Lake my Mormon friends made me presents of flowers and some handsome souvenirs. Also a nice sum of money accompanied with a little note saying that "the laborer is worthy of his hire."

Leaving this great and famous capital of the Mormon people, I went to Ogden, and continued my missionary work. I visited some of the Mormons who were Welsh people. One of them was a Mormon elder and had two wives and a family by each of them. I also visited some of the Mormon widows, of whom there are a great many, and told them of Jesus and His love. One, however, would not receive me into her house, because I was not a Latter Day Saint. But I was usually received with kindness and respect. I purchased my ticket at Ogden for Sacramento. On my arrival there I went to the



Florence Crittenden Mission, where I took part in the meetings, and preached one night in the Rev. Dr. Conner's church, who was chaplain of the senate. I started the first revival that had been held there for a long time. The Doctor wished me to stay longer, but it was not convenient for me to do so, and I told him that God would help them, and that they could get along without me. He gave me a letter of introduction to the Rev. D. D. Williams, pastor of the Congregational church in Tulare county, whom I found very kind and who befriended me in my gospel work.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### WORK IN SAN FRANCISCO.

I finally arrived in San Francisco and remained there seven months, making it my headquarters, and I soon became acquainted with the clergy of the different denominations, preaching all the time in many of the churches. For six weeks I worked with Charles Yateman in the large tent erected by Mr. Chas. Crittenden, founder of so many missions, and thousands came to hear the gospel.

During the midwinter fair in San Francisco many thousand people came to the city, thinking they could secure work, but were disappointed, consequently the city was filled with people without employment, and there was much suffering. Many pastors of the various churches gave nearly all of their salaries to aid the poor and unfortunate. Among them Rev. Dr. Case, Dr. Gibson, Dr. Dilly and others.

The hotel men also gave liberally. Major Hooper, of the Occidental, and Mr. Christian, of the Palace hotel, gave meats and soups, and even the heart of that old gold miner, Lucky Baldwin, as he is called, was touched, and he gave bountifully from his great wealth to aid the destitute.

Mrs. Montgomery, once so well known in Buffalo, N. Y., as Miss Carrie Judd, a zealous Christian worker and evangelist, was in San Francisco at that time and did

most efficient service by soliciting from the merchants food and clothing and was truly the "Good Samaritan" of the city.

The Salvation Army did much to relieve the needy, and many were saved from great suffering through their efforts.

Many poor unfortunates found shelter in the old prison and were fed coffee, meats and bread, for which they paid only five cents. It was man's extremity, but God's opportunity. We held meetings here frequently with the people, and many while kneeling down on that old prison floor were moved to turn to the Lord for salvation, and shed tears of penitence.

I preached at this time in the new prison in which Durant, the murderer, was incarcerated. I also held several meetings in Oakland and in many of the larger towns and cities in California.

At this time the country about Fresno was in great commotion over the arrest of those noted highwaymen, Sontag and Chris Evans. Sontag died from bullet wounds made at the time of his arrest, and I afterward saw his headless body lying in the undertaker's office after a post-mortem examination. His broken-hearted mother passed by me as I entered the door. His wife was the daughter of Chris Evans, his partner. I held services in different churches at Fresno and at Visalia in Dr. Edwards' Southern M. E. church, where at the time Chris Evans' wife and daughter had been members in good standing, but on the arrest of her husband and father they had gone on the stage at San Francisco to earn sufficient means to get him out of prison, thereupon the church had expelled them. They did not succeed in their undertaking and felt great compunctions of conscience at the step they had taken. At this time I heard

of the daughter being taken very sick. Obeying the promptings of the spirit, I called upon them to comfort them as best I could in my feeble way, and, if possible, to bring them back to Christ. I found them ready to receive me and willing to talk on religious subjects, as though the Master had gone before me and prepared the ground for the seed I had come to sow, and the Holy Spirit with its tender influence brought about the result I prayed for. They gave themselves again to Christ and found the peace they once enjoyed. I talked with Dr. Edwards and told him that Eva had said to me that, "If God had sent such a man here before, we never would have gone on the stage;" and he decided they should be taken back into the church.

I found a nephew, and namesake of mine, in this section of the country. He owned a large ranch with much stock. We rode horseback a distance of eighteen miles to the forest of big redwood trees, with which the descriptions in so many books, and the section of one of them having been exhibited at the World's Fair at Chicago, has made every one familiar.

Oh, what a wonder of nature. I was not disappointed. The sight of such gigantic monarchs of the forest, towering hundreds of feet toward heaven, rising above their companions, raised my thoughts from nature to nature's God, and enabled me to give a strong lesson to my nephew, which I hope will bear fruit in the Master's name. He is respected by all of his neighbors, and was once postmaster of the place.

I preached in many of the schoolhouses, in different places, also at Springville and at Porterville. While visiting my nephew I had opportunities of holding many meetings, but, as a rule, found religion at a low ebb, even in the hearts of those who professed to be Christians.

Only now and then could one be found who was willing to pray in public, or make an open profession of his Savior.

From my nephew I learned that the last letter received from his uncle (my brother John) had been mailed from Comptonville in California in the year 1860. It had been directed to my sister Kate. I soon started for Comptonville, having to go by stage. I passed through Grass Valley, also Nevada City, and on arriving at Comptonville, I found a Welsh family by the name of Williams, who had lived there many years, but were not related to me. I was informed by them that no such man as John Williams had ever lived there, and that they had never even heard of any one by that name.

I was very much disappointed, in fact almost broken-hearted, and ready to give up the search. But on the second morning, Mr. Williams, who had insisted upon my stopping with him and who was a wealthy miner, proposed to go with me to see quite an old man, one of the first settlers there, who lived three miles away up in the mountains; a man who was called by all his neighbors who knew him, "Pap Stevens." He was also a miner and a very wealthy man. We succeeded in finding the old gentleman, who looked like a Patriarch, indeed. He was bent over with age, his long locks of white hair hung down over his shoulders and deep furrows in his face showed that the finger of time had done its work. He had seen many hardships in the miners' camps among the mountains for more than half a century.

He received us very kindly, since a stranger coming into the camp and into his house was more than an ordinary event, for it so seldom occurred. I was introduced to him. I then inquired if he had ever known a man in that part of the country by the name of John Williams.



He gazed at me for a moment, seemingly to recall the past. Finally his face brightened up and he replied, "Yes," to my question. "I used to know Captain John Williams well. He was a miner, and at one time my partner in the establishing of the first hydraulic works in this state."

He pointed to the roof of his house and said that it was put on by Captain John. I thanked God that I had found a clue of my long absent brother at last. I had obtained some knowledge of him which I had sought so long for.

I felt delighted that I had even found one who had known him, although it had been so many years ago. It was the first link in the chain of information I had been seeking for. He continued to say that the last news he had of my brother "was thirty years ago. He was then married and had a family, but was then," sorry to say, "a drinking man." That intelligence made me feel very sad, but all the more strengthened my resolution to find him and save him. My host continued: "When last heard of he lived at La Porte, Plumas county, in this state."



## CHAPTER XXII.

### ON THE TRAIL AT LAST.

The next morning I arose early, and with a thankful heart started on foot to find my brother. It was impossible to go in any other way. There were no stages and not even a trail. I had to travel a distance of twenty miles over the mountains, that being the short way. To go around by the old route would be over a hundred miles. On my first day's journey I found a very rough road. It was up hill and down, across ravines and through gullies and hiding places of the wild beasts living in the mountains.

My first stopping place was called Whisky Diggings. I arrived at this mining town about four o'clock in the afternoon, very tired and hungry. I found a lodging place with a countryman of mine, who made me welcome. The town was a rough looking place, inhabited by a mixed class of people, Chinese, Irish, Polanders, etc., all fond of whisky and all digging for gold. I used the opportunity of preaching to them as best I could, telling them that Jesus Christ, only, could take away the appetite for strong drink, and save them from their sins. The next morning I bade them good-bye and started again on my journey over the hills without a compass, hour glass or guide. I walked sometimes on narrow ledges of rocks, on the very verge of great gulfs and yawning chasms into which, unless I was very careful, I might

stumble any moment I missed my step or lost my hold. It would do for a sure footed Indian to walk there, but for an inexperienced white man it was a dangerous place to go.

In many places the mountains towered above me thousands of feet in height, many of them capped with snow. It was a lonely place to travel. I thought of the bears and mountain lions that make their dwelling places amid the fastnesses of these great crags and ravines among the mountains, but remembered that one of olden time was thrown into a den of wild beasts, yet their mouths were closed, and they did him no harm. I felt safe, because I committed myself to the care of Him who promised to care for all who put their trust in Him.

About four miles from my next stopping place, called Brandy Wine Diggings, I met a doctor having a pair of snow-shoes hanging over his back, ready for use if necessary. He told me that at a distance of two miles directly in my path I would come to a great field of snow, which was from ten to seventy feet deep; that it was crusted over, however, so I could walk on it. He then directed me on my way, and went a little distance with me, I following his footsteps. I became very tired, and seeing the snow had melted away around a large tree I thought I would sit down and rest, but I slipped down into a deep hole by the tree, caused by the melting of the snow around it. I was afraid I should never get out again. I had with me my cane and umbrella, and with them managed to get out of my trouble.

After resting on the snow a little while, I started again, climbing the mountain. I needed much courage and faith, but the thoughts of meeting my brother stimulated me, and I pressed on. I soon lost the doctor's trail, as he had gone ahead and was out of sight. Standing still for

a short time like a monument, I knew not what to do, neither did I know in what direction Brandy Wine Digings lay; I did not want to turn back, and was in a quandary. But I trusted in God, and He always provides a way out of trouble to those who put their trust in Him.

Looking away in the distance I could see two men coming around the mountain leading a horse, all wearing snow-shoes—horse and men.

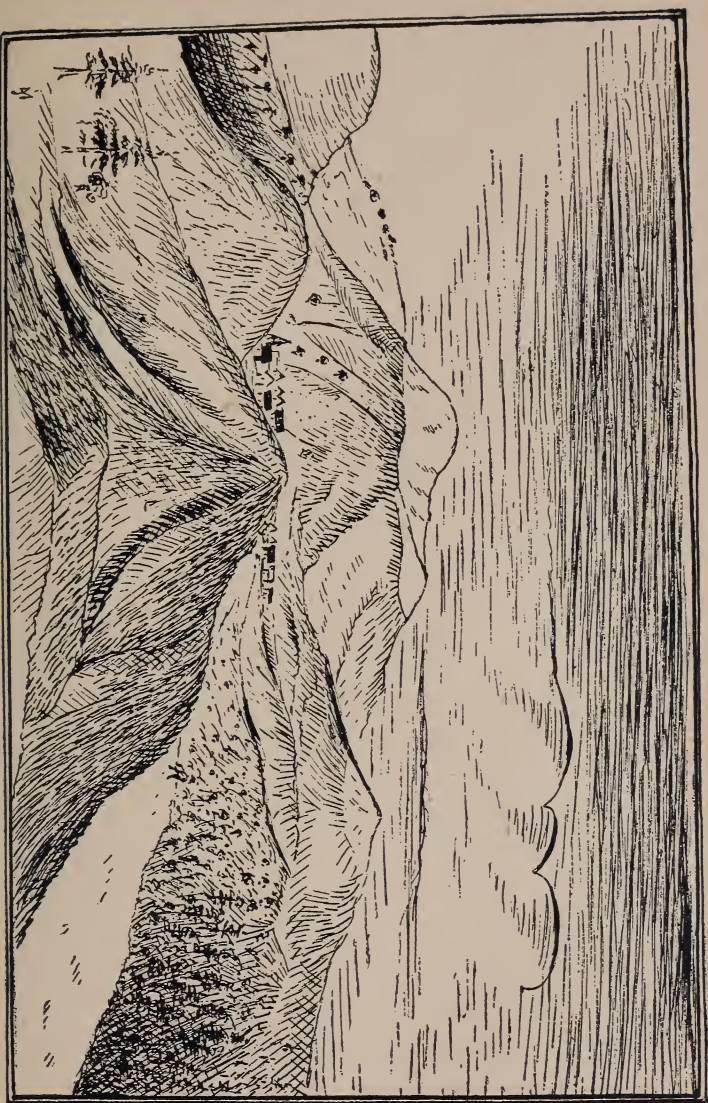
I shouted to them at the top of my voice: "Ho there!" They heard me, and I thanked God for the sound of a human voice in that trackless waste of snow, and especially as they brought me glad news of my brother. While I waited a few moments they came nearer and nearer, until I could ask them to direct me the nearest way to La Porte. I also asked them if they knew a man by the name of Captain John Williams. They said, "Yes."

Dear reader, my feelings at the moment I will not attempt to describe, but leave to your imagination. My heart expanded with thankfulness that through God's guidance my mother's wish would be realized.

From these men I learned that my brother's home was about five miles away. I started on with redoubled vigor. My traveling seemed quite easy, for I had only that short distance to go, and the great aim of my long journey was about accomplished. They told me to direct my course a little to the west until I found their trail, and then follow it and it would lead me straight to Captain John Williams' door, for they had just come from there.

I continued going forward, according to their directions, with my heart overflowing with gratitude and praise to God. I soon came to a deep ravine through which a large stream was flowing, over which I could not cross. I looked about me and saw at a little distance that a





LA PORTE, CAL.





tree which had fallen across the chasm would serve me as a bridge. I very carefully crossed on it, reaching the other side safely.

I then found a path leading from a gold mine to La Porte, and taking it went on up over the mountain, a distance of three miles, to the little town where my brother and family lived.

I soon stood at his front door, as one of the neighbors had pointed out the house to me.

I shall never forget my feelings at that moment, nor the events of that day. It was on the sixth day of May, 1895. The scenes of the past forty-three years seemed to come up before me. Memory carried me back to the time when we, as a family, were all at home in Wales; of our boyhood days, when my brother and I played together on the old homestead, climbing the mountain, fishing and sailing on the sea; of the meetings and partings; the many changes that had taken place; of those that had gone, and of the few still living—myself, brothers John and David, now in Watertown, Wis.

I thought of the last time I saw my brother and wondered if he would know me. We were boys together; now the years had wrought their changes, and no doubt he was much changed and would see a great change in me.

I was tired and hungry, for I had not eaten anything since breakfast. I looked around over the town and saw that it was a small place, and like all mining towns in that part of the country.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### FOUND AT LAST.

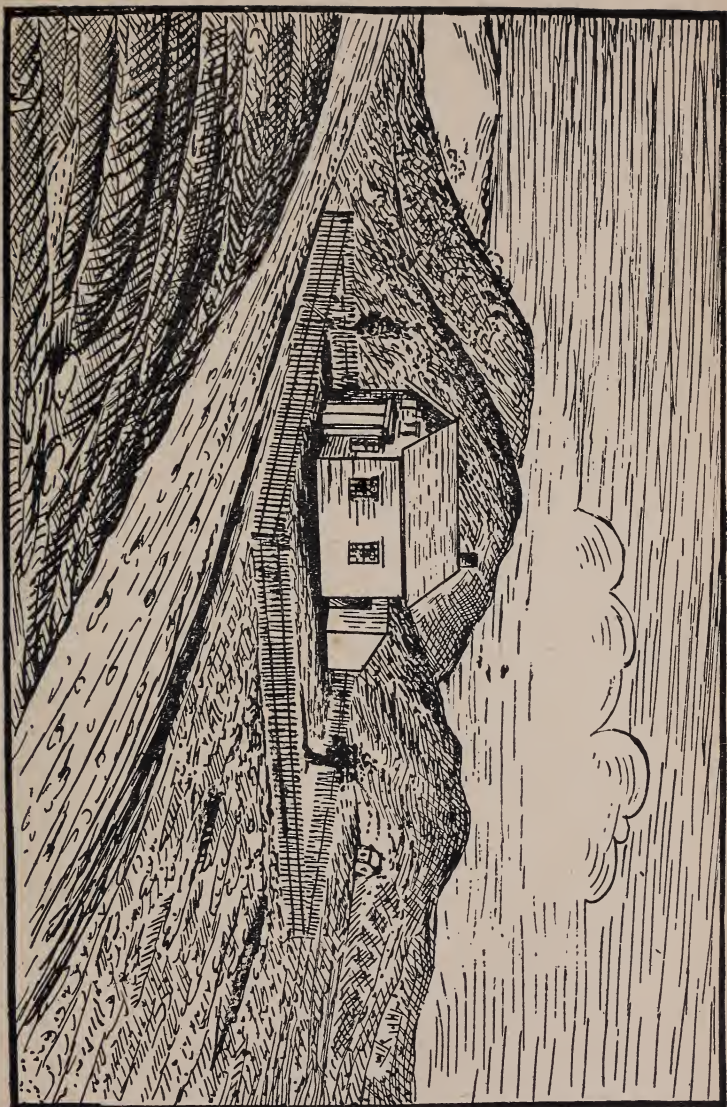
I knocked at the door, and a nice, pleasant looking lady came and opened it.

I asked her if this was Mr. Williams' house. She said: "Yes, Sir, but he is not at home."

She looked at me rather suspiciously, I thought. I afterward learned she had taken me for a United States detective, looking after those persons who used the government water without any license. She asked me to come in, however, and I took a seat by the fire. She offered me a pair of slippers, as my feet were wet; my garments were in the same condition also. She immediately placed before me, in a very hospitable manner, something to eat, which I partook of gladly.

All of this time she was looking at me very inquisitively. Finally she asked my name. I hesitated a moment, hardly willing to tell her until my brother had returned, but after asking her if she could keep a secret if I should tell one to her, and at her reply that "a woman *can* keep a secret," I said, "I will trust you." I then told her my name was Williams.

She jumped to the conclusion at once, saying, "You are my husband's brother." She was so overjoyed she put her arms around my neck and kissed me, saying, "How strange it is that only yesterday your brother John was talking about his family, and said, with tears in his



RESIDENCE OF CAPT. JOHN WILLIAMS, LA PORTE, CAL.





eyes, 'They must all be dead, or have forgotten me.' He also spoke about you, his brother Robert, and he had not mentioned your name before for years."

I told her I wanted to kneel down and thank God for bringing me thus far safely to my brother's home, for I am glad to say I found her to be a child of God. The children soon came in from school, among them a young girl named after my sister Annie. She was fourteen years of age. Georgie was eighteen; Eddie the youngest son was seven; the oldest was thirty. We all entered into an agreement to surprise the father when he came from the mines, where he was digging for gold. We did not have to wait long, for soon we heard his footsteps. It was agreed upon that they were to introduce me to my brother as a Mr. Jones from Utica, N. Y.

He came into the dining room, and I heard the conversation between him and his wife. She told him that a gentleman by the name of Jones, from Utica, N. Y., was in the parlor, and wished to see him regarding some gold mines. She requested me not to reveal myself too suddenly to him, as he was afflicted with heart disease, and she was afraid that if so unusual and unexpected an event were revealed to him too suddenly it might affect him seriously and perhaps cause his death. After supper he came into the parlor, and my heart beat like a trip-hammer as I saw him coming. The face I had not seen for forty-three years, my own brother, and one of the family whom I promised my mother forty-six years ago to keep together, after she was dead. The children were all in the parlor with me. He looked at me with a strange expression on his countenance, which I cannot soon forget. He had changed much since I last saw him. Once his hair and beard were like the raven's wing, but now they were white as snow. I recognized him, however. It was my long lost

brother John. The introduction came. He shook hands with me, but intuitively I knew he was very nervous. I began to talk with him about a gold mine which he owned, together with his son and a Mr. Mullen, named the "Highland Mary," and which was considered one of the most valuable in that part of the country. After talking about this a short time, I felt that I must make myself known to him. I could keep the secret no longer, not being able to suppress the emotions of my heart. I spoke to him about his family and his mother, which brought tears to his eyes. He talked about his sister Kate, and his brothers Robert and David, saying too, "Here is my little daughter Annie."

At this point my emotions overcame me, and tremblingly I laid my hand upon his shoulder and said: "*John, I am your brother Robert,*" and I put my arms around his neck. With a quick, sharp look at my face, examining its every feature, he said: "*No, you cannot be Robert,* for he is dead. The last time I saw him was four years before I started for California. He was then living in Boston." This gave me an opportunity of proving myself to him. I said: "You say you remember that last meeting with your brother Robert?" He said: "Yes, perfectly." I said: "Let me recall it to your mind, that you may be convinced that I am he. I went in a nice two-horse carriage to visit you with sister Kate, who was the mother of the family. It was a beautiful summer afternoon and your conversation was about going, later on, to California, which you finally did in two or three years."

I then talked about our mother's grave and the family in general. He was then convinced I was his own brother Robert.

Sobbing and crying, he laid his head on my shoulder, as Jacob did when he met his brother Esau, overcome by his emotion. It was an interview long to be remembered.

Brother meeting with brother, after nearly half a century had passed, each having for many years thought the other dead. Every one in the room wept with joy and thanksgiving, for the lost was found, away among the craggy peaks of the Sierra Nevada mountains in California. It was a happy time. We all knelt down and united our thanks to God, that He had brought to pass the desire of my heart, and had permitted me to see my brother once more, and his interesting family.

We talked about the past and the many changes that we had seen and passed through since we last met.

He thought he was the only one remaining of the little family that left Wales with such high anticipations so many years ago to seek a home in America, the stranger's land. He had not heard from any of his brothers or sisters. He had worked in the mines and was much secluded from the outside world. But he had an interesting family. His wife was the daughter of Mr. O'Grady, who was once an official of the San Quinton prison in San Francisco, but now an official of the mint of that city. She was a niece of James O'Grady, Esq., a distinguished lawyer of New York city. The children are all very exemplary in their deportment and habits. Her oldest son has never tasted of tobacco or whisky, nor used profane language.

I remained here with my brother for two weeks, visiting the people and holding meetings. The time came when I finally held my farewell service in the old M. E. church there in La Porte. After giving them a short account of my life's experiences, I ended with my lecture on "Mother's little red Bible," or, "I have kept my promise to my mother, God helping me." The church was well filled with the residents of the place, who were made up of various nationalities. Many of those present

wept when I told them the story of my mother's death, of father and sister Kate, and of the promise I made to my mother forty-six years before. My brother was quite overcome, and kneeling down prayed to his mother's God the prayer of the publican, while the arms of his brother Robert were around his neck. Many of the congregation sought the pearl of great price and found it then and there, my brother included among the number.

"And there was joy in Heaven." That night was one of the happiest of my life. All the hardships I had endured, the long journey of thousands of miles that I had traveled to keep the promise to my dear mother of finding this brother, were all forgotten, and I was receiving my reward, for he that was "lost was found," and made alive in Christ.

I had been searching three years or more, had traveled over sandy deserts, crossed many rivers, had climbed mountains covered with snow in search of my brother. During this time, while in the west—in California, British Columbia and Washington Territory—I preached the gospel wherever I could.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### LEAVING CALIFORNIA.

But the time came when I had to leave my brother and his kind family, also the little town among the mountains, with the many friends I had made there, in order to continue the work I felt God had laid out for me.

The neighbors gathered around the little stage office the morning of my departure, to bid me good-bye, and many showed by the hearty shake of the hand, and fervent "God bless you," that I had secured a place in their hearts.

It was hard to part with my brother and his family, not knowing whether I should ever see them again; but committing them all to One who careth for all, while they wept, I took my seat in the stage, and was soon out of sight.

On my return to the east I preached in many of the cities on the route, at Helena, Mont., and at Great Falls, in the Rev. F. A. Riggin's church, where meetings were held for two weeks with good success. I also held services in Portland, Ore., Butte City, British Columbia, and at St. Paul, Minn., in the People's church, and many other places, in some of the opera houses, many of the Y. M. C. A. rooms, and will give a few of the many kind notices I have received from the various pastors where I have worked, as well as from many of the newspapers published in the cities I have visited.



My fervent prayer in concluding this narrative of my eventful and checkered life, with all its varied scenes of drunkenness, gambling and sinful pleasures, together with my conversion in the old prison cell, may be a lesson to all who are in darkness and sin, and that they may take warning by my experience, and shun the evil, choose the light that shines from the cross, accept Christ as their only hope, who will save and keep them from the thousand ills I experienced, and guide them safely over life's tempestuous sea, for

“Unknown waves before us roll,  
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal,  
Chart and compass come from Thee,  
Jesus, Savior, pilot me”

To that haven where the weary cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Amen.



Letter from a prominent physician of Chicago.

3200 VERNON AVE., CHICAGO, February 5, 1896.

MY DEAR FRIEND WILLIAMS:

I am glad to hear that you have returned safely from the Pacific coast, and also that your health is fairly good. Only reflect for a single minute, that I have known you intimately for forty years. When I first met you in Boston I was attending Harvard University, and you were the gay and handsome "Bob Williams," of the fashionable and aristocratic club of Boston. You were then paying homage at the shrine of Bacchus, and watching the graceful curls of smoke from your fifty cent cigars. You were then hobnobbing with the young bloods of Boston, indulging in Mumm's best dry and the costly brands of Madeira. You were then basking in the sunshine of alluring and seductive pleasures, giving little heed to the outlook of the future; but you were drifting toward solid rocks unwittingly, because when your mind was in its normal condition, you always seemed to feel that your life, as being spent there, was without a worthy and laudable object in view. I predicted then that you would surely abandon a career that left you nothing to contemplate and recall but burning, bitter regrets and dead sea ashes, and lastly, you did escape the deadly and paralyzing influence of your companions, and the palsy touch of those who have passed into the silence of the sepulcher, forgotten, unheard of, and lost to memory.

How many of the young bloods who were your companions are alive to day? The majority have been called

to the silent realm; many filled a drunkard's grave, others became physical or mental wrecks, while others still found a refuge in the inebriate asylum. I am indeed glad that you escaped the sad fate of many of your early associates; that you sought and found refuge within the confines of the Christian church; that you wandered into the fold of Christian charity, love and sympathy; that you found, after many years of wandering, a haven of rest in the spiritual communion with your Savior, whose untold and boundless riches of sustaining grace and uplifting power and love have brought you from darkness to light, from sin, folly and baneful habits to the crowning glories of a devoted, Christian life. Now, Bob, my dear fellow, stand firm upon the solid rock; continue in your ministrations; gather in the idlers and wanderers; soothe the sorrow of those who repent; encourage the faltering and doubting, and pursue your course of self-denial, self-sacrificing life, for there is surely a glittering crown awaiting you in the eternal mansion above. May God bless your efforts, sustain and strengthen you in your noble works, and finally bring you into His Kingdom as a worthy worker in the Army of the Cross. Faithfully,

ANDREW JAS. PARK, M. D.

#### CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP.

This certifies that Robert G. Williams, the bearer, is an acceptable member of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Waukesha, Wis.

HENRY P. HAZLETT, Pastor.

MARCH 1, 1890.

N. B.—We have enjoyed Brother Williams' stay with us very much. The prayers and good wishes of pastor and people go with him.

Rev. R. G. Williams is well known to us as a faithful evangelist and missionary in this city, working day and night for the poor and needy without fee and compensation.

W. W. CASE,

Pastor Howard Street M. E. Church, July 30, 1894.

J. G. CHOWN,

Christian Union Mission.

M. M. GIBSON,

Pastor of First United Presbyterian Church, San Francisco.

F. A. DOANE,

Minister in charge of the Mizpah Presbyterian Church.

*To All Whom It May Concern:* This is to certify that Brother R. G. Williams has labored for two weeks in our charge as an evangelist. His sermons have been characterized by great earnestness and spiritual power, especially helpful to those who, like himself, have been long in sin.

He has been pleasant in our home and genial in Christian co-operation. We commend him to those needing his services.

Fraternally,

REV. F. A. RIGGIN,

Great Falls, Mont.

OCTOBER 1, 1895.

[From Great Falls, Montana *Standard*, September 19, 1896.]

R. G. Williams, the Welsh evangelist, now holding services in this city, is a pleasant, interesting talker, and has an eventful career. He doesn't parade the streets with a brass drum to attract attention. Mr. Williams is a gentleman capable of doing good in the profession he has chosen to follow, because he enjoys the respect and confidence of those he has around him. He believes what he

says, and is devoting his life to earnest and successful Christian work.

PASTOR'S STUDY, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

CAMDEN, N. J., May 21, 1892.

REV. L. T. GRAHAM:

*My Dear Brother:* This introduces to you Mr. R. G. Williams, of New York, a reliable and devoted temperance evangelist, whom I have known the past two years. He has a thrilling life history, and is calculated to do great good, especially among the young. He has just finished an excellent work for me in one of my missions. Give him a hearing and help to set before him an effectual door to a good service in your city.

Fraternally yours,

REV. WELLINGTON E. LOUCKS.

41 SPRUCE STREET, NEWARK, N. J., Dec. 3, 1891.

MR. ROBERT G. WILLIAMS, Eighth Avenue, near  
Twenty-second Street, New York.

*My Dear Brother:* I write as you requested. Your talk on Sunday night was very much enjoyed, and I appreciate your coming over.

Wishing you every possible success in your work for the Master wherever you may be, I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

REV. LYMAN W. ALLEN, Pastor.

PHILADELPHIA, May 25, 1892.

*To Whom It May Concern:* I believe Mr. R. G. Williams to be a consecrated Christian man, and capable of doing good service in the Master's vineyard.

L. T. GRAHAM.



68 DAVID STREET, VICTORIA, B. C., Sept. 4, 1894.

*To Whom It May Concern:* Brother R. G. Williams, the Welsh evangelist and exhorter in the M. E. church, bears letters from various churches in San Francisco and other places, some of whom I am acquainted with, especially Rev. W. W. Case, D. D., of the Howard street church. I have been much refreshed and profited by our Christian fellowship during his brief stay in our city.

JOSEPH HALL,  
Pastor of Centennial Methodist Church.

216 W. FOURTEENTH STREET,  
NEW YORK, April 28, 1892.

*To Whom It May Concern:* This is to certify that I am well acquainted with R. G. Williams, and hereby commend him to the fellowship and love of all Christians. Brother Williams is a man of undoubted piety, an earnest worker. He was made exhorter by the pastor of Jane Street M. E. church, January 5, 1890. He is now a member of the First M. E. church, Waukesha, Wis. He is a very useful man. May God bless him and go before him.

R. M. STRATTON,  
Pastor Green Street M. E. Church, New York.

LELAND HOTEL, CHICAGO, ILL., August 17, 1889.  
MR. LEE, Fountain Spring House, Waukesha, Wis.

*Dear Sir:* I take pleasure in introducing my friend, R. G. Williams, who is a competent hotel man, and a gentleman whom I have known many years. He is a man of integrity, and you can rely fully upon any statement which he makes to you.

I will go on his bond for the amount of \$10,000. Many years ago he was steward of the Everett House, New York city. He has also been inside steward for my

brother, Warren, at the Leland Hotel, this city. He is an honest, reliable, Christian man, worthy of your consideration and regard. Mutually yours,

LEWIS LELAND,  
WARREN F. LELAND.

I heartily endorse all that my friend, Mr. Leland, has written. Mr. Williams is one man in a thousand, and can give the best of satisfaction.

JUDGE MURATT MATTESON,  
Mexico.

FOUNTAIN SPRING HOUSE,  
WAUKESHA, WIS., August 31, 1891.

I take pleasure in endorsing Mr. R. G. Williams, who has been steward and purchasing agent for the Fountain Spring House during the summer season, as being a sober, thoroughly competent, experienced, honest and industrious man.

Very truly yours,

J. M. LEE,  
Proprietor.

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[From *Racine Times* December 2, 1895.]

Rev. Bob Williams delivered his famous lecture last evening at the Trinity M. E. church to a very large audience. The service may best be described as one of intense interest. Under the burning words of the eloquent speaker strong men trembled and women wept. At the close of the lecture there was an uprising of the entire congregation to manifest their hearty approval of the discourse they had listened to with wrapt attention. Mr. Williams pictured the downward course of the man who gives himself up to drink, as exemplified in his own career, and so terrible was the picture that many were moved to tears.

From Rev. A. C. Hirst, D. D., LL. D.

I met R. G. Williams in San Francisco, who was doing Christian work in the missions and some of the churches. He gives all his time and energy to this work, inviting men everywhere to Christ.

A. C. HIRST,  
Pastor Centenary M. E. Church, Chicago.

It gives me pleasure to say that R. G. Williams was a member of the First M. E. church in Chicago when I was pastor there, and had the respect and confidence of all who knew him. He often gave us an account of his sinful career and his conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost.

H. W. BOLTON,  
Pastor Park Ave. M. E. Church, Chicago.

AT Y PARCH R. G. WILLIAMS :

*Anwyl Frawd:* Yr wyf yn deall eich bod yn cyhoeddi hanes eich bywyd "Robin Williams y Meddwyn Dychweledig." Nis gwn am neb cymwysach i'r gwaith. Bzddaf yn edrych arnoch ers Clynyddan, fel colofn eglor; a thystiolaeth gref; o alla a dylanwad gras Duw—galln i droi; a chadw pechadwreaid, mawrion. Duw yn rhwydd i chur, gydaich antur iaeth, an fawwch i mi y Llyfr.

Yn gyurs,

REV. D. J. BISMARCK DAVIS.

CHICAGO, Chwef 27, 1896.

(*Translated.*)

REV. R. G. WILLIAMS:

*Dear Old Friend:* I am glad to understand you are going to publish a book—your own history of "Bob Williams, the Reformed Drunkard." I don't know of any one more suitable to expose and give a thorough experience of a hard case than you—when in the world in the nearest side to hell

you could possibly be. Since you had a *turn* you proved yourself to be a genuine Christian, reflecting with energy the power of the grace of God. Send me the book.

Respectfully, BISMARCK DAVIS.

I endorse the above.

THE REV. D. S. DAVIS,  
Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Joliet, Ill.

It gives me sincere pleasure to heartily unite in commending my dear Brother Williams to the favorable consideration of all who love Jesus Christ.

FRANCIS MURPHY,  
Temperance Evangelist.

TACOMA, November 26, 1894.

MR. R. G. WILLIAMS:

*Dear Sir:* I listened to your address in the Y. M. C. A. rooms yesterday afternoon, and was very much pleased with it. After the service I went home and took from my Bible (presented to me by my mother) the enclosed poem, which I wish to present to you. I have another copy of the same pasted in my Bible, and I trust you will do likewise with this enclosed.

Wishing you success and God-speed in your chosen work, I am,

Very truly yours,

H. H. CROSBY.

A son of Fanny Crosby, the authoress.

#### A MOTHER'S GIFT—THE BIBLE.

(2 Tim., iii:14, 15.)

Remember, love, who gave thee this,  
When other days shall come,  
When she who had the earliest kiss  
Sleeps in her narrow home.  
Remember, 'twas a mother gave  
The gift to one she'd die to save.

Thy mother sought a pledge of love,  
The holiest for her son;  
And from the gifts of God above  
She chose this holy one—  
She chose for her beloved boy  
The source of light and life and joy.

I bid thee keep the gift, that when  
The parting hour shall come,  
We may have hope to meet again  
In an eternal home.  
Thy precious faith in this shall be  
Sweet incense to my memory.

And should the scoffer in his pride  
Laugh that found faith to scorn,  
And bid thee cast the pledge aside  
That thou from youth hast borne,  
I bid thee pause, and ask thy breast  
If he or I have loved thee best.

A mother's blessing on her son  
Goes with this holy thing;  
The heart that would enjoy the one  
Must to the other cling.  
Remember, 'tis no idle toy,  
A mother's gift, my darling boy.





This letter was written to my darling babe when I was overwhelmed with grief after the death of her dear mother. It is an obituary of my dear wife, as well as a letter from a sorrowful father to his only child.

ROBT. VAUGHN.

Presented to R. G. Williams, the Welsh Evangelist, by the author.

GREAT FALLS, MONT., Sept. 18, 1895.

*My Darling Little Babe:* Your mother died January 13, 1888, when you were but thirteen days old. To-day you are seven weeks old. Your tongue and communicative powers are tied with the tie of infancy. You can't tell papa how dear mamma loved and how sweet her last kiss was. You can't tell papa that mamma said, "Take good care of darling babe," and how she embraced you to her bosom and blessed you for the last time. Neither can you apprehend papa telling you how happy papa and mamma lived together. You are now sleeping in the cradle and I am sitting alone by your side thinking of your dear mother and how she loved you before you were born and the pleasure she had when making your little clothes during the last four months, before she was confined to her bed.

- But she has gone to that land where rivers flow over golden sands—where pearls and many a gem deck the shores. Last night, as I was mourning after her and thinking of her loving companionship and her kind words, a still voice came to me saying, "Tell our darling babe

that we lived happy." This put me to thinking that I may have gone through the "valley" before you will be old enough for me to tell you this happy tale. But, by the grace of God, I comfort myself with the hope that you and I will be companions to each other for many years to come, and that I will have the pleasure of listening to you reading me this letter which I am now writing to you. God bless you, sweet angel!

Your dear mother was born near Toronto, Canada, March 19, 1855. She was the daughter of Matthew and Jane Donahue. We were married August 25, 1886, at the home of Uncle and Aunt Spencer (where also she made her home), by Rev. J. H. Little. The same morning we left for Helena. We got there next day. It was fair week. We staid five days and met many friends. Here we had our photos taken and purchased our household goods—the organ, sewing machine, etc. And this is the time I had her ring made out of a nugget of gold I had taken from the mines twenty years before. We came home happy and went to work and organized our little home, and in about three weeks we had it—to us—a little palace. And oh! such a welcome she always gave me when I came home! What a heart she had! So large and pure, and so kind and womanly! She always kept everything so neat and nice. She made me love home and gave me a new thought—how very little happiness depends upon money. Often in the still hour of the evening we would stroll away through the meadows, sometimes down along the banks of Sun river, and carelessly hold each other's hand. She walked closely at my side, telling me some sweet words and sometimes rhymes, and often we sang some favorite hymn. And now it seems to me how beautiful those happy days were. They are like dreams.

Your dear mother was always pleasant. I never left the house to go all day without she would come and give me a kiss before I went, and never failed to meet me at the door to give me a kiss and a welcome on my return. We truly loved each other. No two who joined hands together ever lived happier than we. Whatever I did she always thought was done right, and whatever she did I could not improve. It was impossible. Anything in the house, if it was moved from the place she had for it I could see that it was out of its place. Even a picture on the wall could not be placed anywhere else to look as well as the place she already had for it. She was a perfect mechanic. She was genial. She was gentle and polite in her manners. A more faithful partner never lived. A more true, affectionate wife and a more loving mother could not be. Your dear mother was a Christian. She lived as a Christian and died as a Christian. The first time we met in our little chamber to go to rest for the first night together, your dear mother knelt by the bedside and prayed to God to give us grace and bless us as we started on the voyage of life together. She asked Him to give us grace to live a happy life, to live so we could die happy. And many, many times I have thought of her prayers during our happy life together, and of her sweet words, "Tell the folks I die happy." From that night to the last time she went to her bed she always prayed before she went to rest for the night. Also in the morning she kneeled before the Throne of Grace and thanked the Lord for His loving kindness. She always had her Bible on the dresser or on the table in our bedroom, and perused it with care. She said one day: "If we can't attend church regularly in this country, we can be good by prayer to God and read our Bible regularly." And

her motto, in her own handiwork, is now over our bedroom door, chosen by herself years ago. It is this:

\*.....\*  
:  
SIMPLY  
:  
TO THY CROSS I CLING.  
:  
\*.....\*

She illustrated on her deathbed how this beautiful motto was engraved on her heart, for among her last sayings were: "Blessed be the Savior who died on the cross, and I cling to that cross." Oh, what a treasure she was! Our short life together was but a holiday, and a happy one. And here now I ask you, my dear babe, let your creed be the Bible and your example your dear mother. If your father will not be with you ask some one to teach you to pray when you are young, for He said: "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." "The same God who molded the sun and kindled the stars watches the flight of an insect. He who balances the clouds and hung the worlds upon nothing notices the fall of a sparrow. He who gives Saturn his rings, and placed the moon like a ball of silver in the broad arch of heaven; who gives the rose leaf its delicate tint, and makes the distant sun to nourish the violet, the same Being notices the praises of the cherubim and the prayers of a little child." It is He who is the father of the orphan; He whom your dear mother placed her trust in, and who comforted her through life and in death.

The following is her testimony on her deathbed of a happy life ending in a happy death. She said to your sorrowful father: "My dear, do not let this worry you. Trust in the Lord and He will support you. I have trusted in Christ through all my life; now I trust in



Him and He comforts me, for the Lord doeth all things well. I am ready to meet Him. I am ready to die. Take care of our darling babe. God bless the little angel. It seems hard to us that we must part after living but a little while together, but it is God's will; it is well. Do not be sad; be happy. The ring you had made for me in Helena I will take with me. Call my loved ones to my side and let me kiss them and bid them good-bye. Tell the folks I die happy. Blessed be the Savior who died on the cross. Oh Lord! I am ready—take me, oh Lord! Take me at midnight or in the dawning of the morning. Dear Lord, take me. Let me go home in peace. The valley is lighter. I see the great white throne. I want to go home." She frequently said, "I want to go home," or, "Take me home," during her last hours on earth. Thus your dear mother passed away in peace, prepared to meet the God in whom she had placed her trust. I imagined hearing the soft wings of the angels fluttering in the room when they came to take her home, and their soft whisperings saying, "She is dying happy. She is clinging to the cross;" then a voice, "Open the gates of heaven; she is coming home." Her remains are sheltered safe from sorrow in the cemetery at Great Falls. Dear is the spot where she sleeps. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me." Now, my dear little daughter, I am about to close this joy-mingled-with-grief letter, hoping that you and I will be loving companions to each other, to go and decorate your dear mother's grave for many decoration days to come.

Remember dear mother's words, her Savior's cause extend—  
"Live pure and holy here as through life's way you wend"—  
And when the journey is over and you come to the valley  
May her words be your words, "Tell the folks I die happy."



The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. May He be your guide. Put your trust in Him. And that He will comfort you in life and in death is the prayer of your affectionate father,

ROBERT VAUGHN.











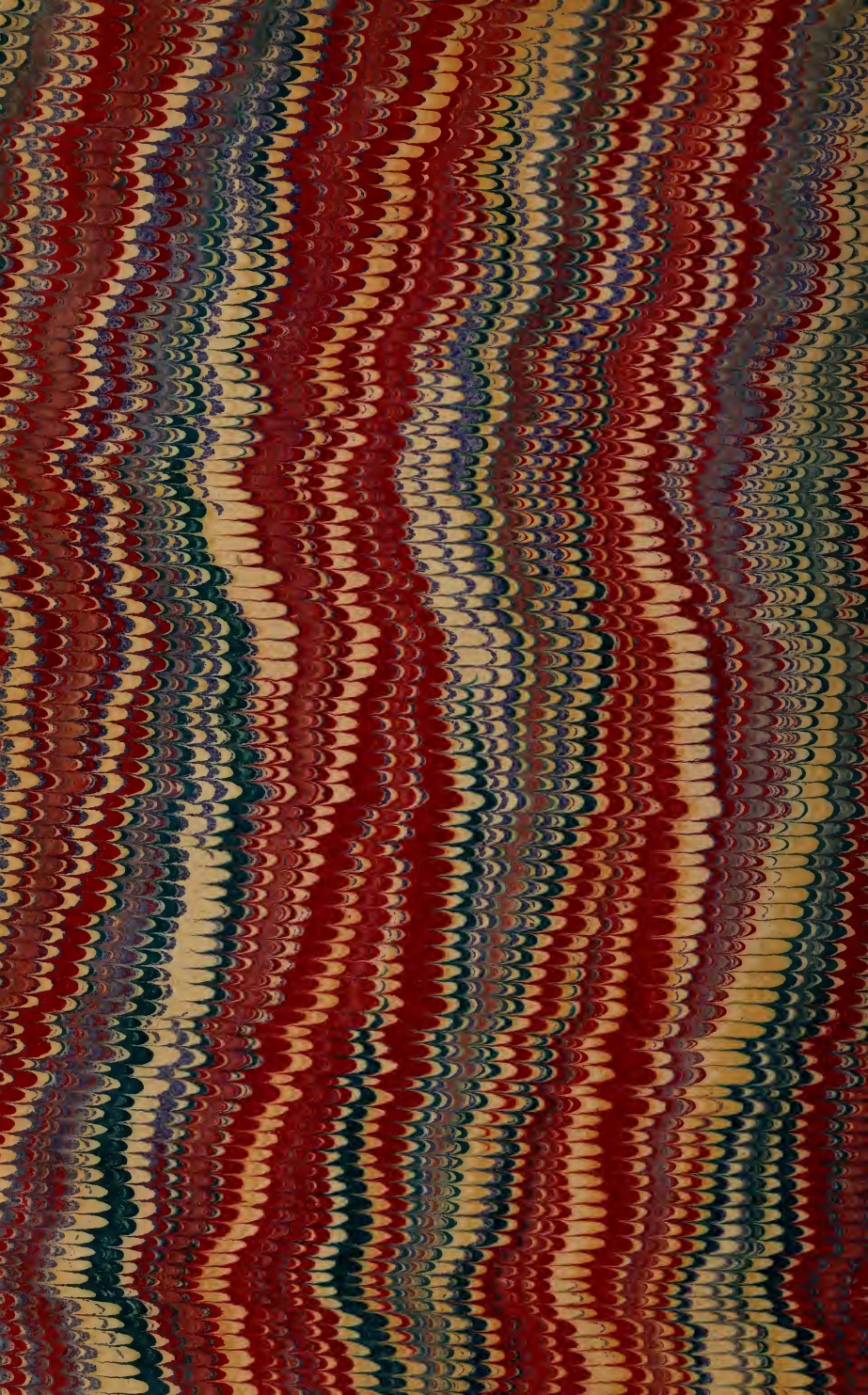


















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